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"I FOUND THIS ONE MUCH MORE SCARY"
Daisy Ridley

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WELCOME TO TOTAL FILM

THE SMARTER MOVIE MAGAZINE



They say never meet your heroes. Sod that. This issue I got to hang out with Luke Skywalker himself, Mark Hamill, as part of our extensive coverage of the hands-down most anticipated film of the year: *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. As well as an in-depth feature for which I also spoke to director Rian Johnson and his cast, we've also explored the complete history of the Jedi, spoken to the founder of the real-word Church of Jediism, and uncovered everything you could possibly want to know about porgs.

Once you've had your Jedi fix, there's plenty more to explore inside the issue, including our in-depth chat with Jake Gyllenhaal, Aaron Sorkin reflecting on his mighty career, and Karen Gillan getting her game face on for *Jumanji*. Plus, Netflix launches its biggest challenge to Hollywood yet with the mega-budget, high-concept fantasy-thriller *Bright*, and we have the full story on it. As well as all the news, reviews and regulars you've come to expect, if you haven't started drawing up a Christmas list yet, we've also got a massive geeky gift guide starting on page 104 to help you on your way...

ENJOY THE ISSUE!

Matt

Matt Maytum, Acting Editor

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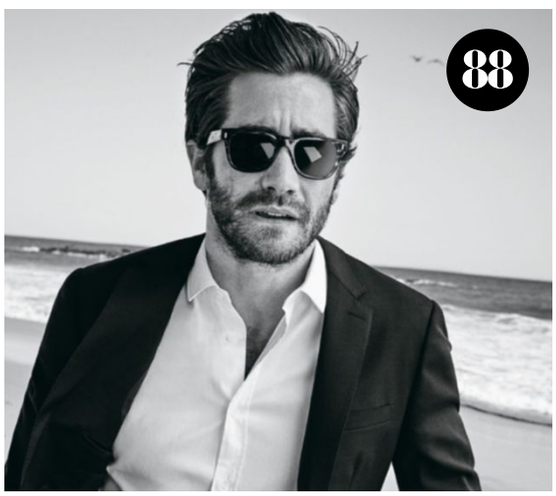
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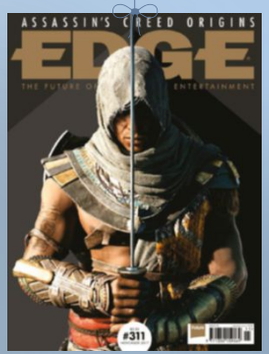
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Dialogue

Mail, rants, theories etc.



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TOTAL FILM WINGMAN

TF'S CINEMATIC AGONY UNCLE HAS YOUR BACK.

DEAR WINGMAN

Help! Which film is this? It ends with a bus heading towards a big building (while maybe being shot at by the police); when it reaches the building, it pretty much collapses. And this one? Came out possibly between 2000–04 and has some people living in a place with lots of war (London maybe?) who find a portal in the attic that leads to a sandy place – another planet perhaps?
EIDER DUTRA, VIA EMAIL

WINGMAN SAYS...

The Wingman's best guesses would be 1) *Speed* – or a Michael Bay-directed episode of *On The Buses*; and 2) *The Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe* – albeit from 2005, with snow not sand and yes, we did give *The Wardrobe* a cover. Alas, plans to cover-mount a flat-pack cupboard fell apart amid a mass uprising from the nation's newsagents.



PARENT TRAP
Gerard Butler as satellite designer – and most importantly, dad – Jake Lawson in *Geostorm*.

STAR LETTER

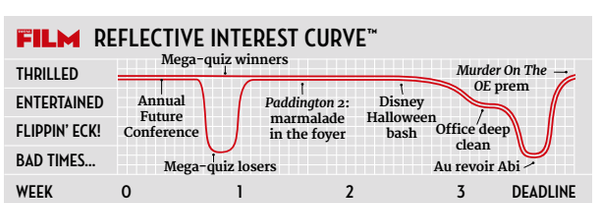
To all film companies currently making a disaster movie: whether it's for cinema or TV, I'm down on my knees begging – can just one of them not be about a crap dad redeeming himself?
JAMES FISHER, VIA EMAIL



Not to be presumptuous, but we're 110 per cent certain you're talking about *Geostorm*, aka *An Inconvenient Dud*, the crazy-weather block-Butler most viewers didn't give a fog about. But yes, the crap-dad-makes-good-by-deactivating-a-volcano needs to go get its pipe and slippers. Let's at least have a few bad 'moms' – yes, those ones – realigning those perpetually un-aligned satellites and whatnot. James and everyone with a letter printed here will receive *Game Of Thrones* Season 7, available now on digital and on DVD/Blu-ray 11 December via HBO Home Entertainment. Didn't send an address? Email it! Or just shove a raven in the post.

REY TOO MUCH

I really don't understand all the hype around *Star Wars* all the time. It's a rubbish franchise, poorly done and to be honest I am sick to death of hearing about it and its new sequels. It can't be that good if they keep adding to them and changing them. *Star Wars* is like a plague that keeps on multiplying. I really wish it would just disappear forever but then I would have to be in





Sorry, Brucie – please don't hurt us!

an alternate reality somewhere maybe! I cannot be the only one that feels this way about it, can I?
MAT INGLEDEW, HULL

Um… you may want to skip certain parts of this issue, Mat; there's the odd page or 16 on all things Jedi (*Star Wars* non-haters: turn to page 56). Anyone else feel similar? Do you loathe Luke? Don't give a fig about Finn? Hate do you, the way no can mention Yoda without his speech pattern mimicking? In you must write!

THE 100 CLUB

Democracy has failed us again! How can you have a list of the 100 Greatest Movie Characters Ever [TF265] and there be no mention of Deadpool, Rambo or Begbie?!! No Dracula either! What's going on here? Absolutely shocking.
ROB HAVERCAN, DARTFORD

Love the mag of course, but there's one guy missing from your list. First of all he would've kicked the shit out of Jason Bourne and James Bond; at the same time killed John McClane at a stroll (with no shoes on), knocked Mad Max into next week and probably would've downed The Bride for nicking his clothes ideas and stuck Darth Vader's lightsaber up his arse… come on guys, how can Mr. Lee aka Bruce not be on the list?
MARK PRICE HOLDEN, DEVON

If it'd been the 100 Greatest Movie Stars, or Action Stars, or Tracksuit-Wearing Badasses (see also: Nice Guy Eddie, Biff Tannen), Brucie would've been right up there. Lest we forget, he once ripped a handful of hair from the chest of Chuck Norris, no less. OK, Chuck's got enough to spare that he could help the Three Little Pigs build a block of flats, but still. As for Rob's list of omissions – we would happily

OFFICE SPACED

Chatter 'gems' overheard in the Total Film office this month…

"It's too bad you won't punctuate. But then again, who does?" * **"Honest statement here: I think *Grown Ups* is better than *Inception*."** * "When I look at our group, I consider myself the godfather of woke." * **"I do love a Terry's Clockwork Orange."**



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SHARK CAKE WEEK
bit.ly/2yl33wS
We see a lot of fancy cakes here, but this one took the, um, biscuit. Promoting *Cage Dive* on DVD, it looked good enough to star in a Spielberg movie; seemed almost a shame to devour it like starving piranhas…



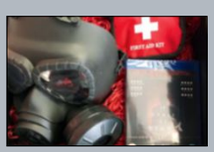
NECRONOMICON CAKE
bit.ly/2z3eWVl
A tasty tie-in for *Ash Vs Evil Dead S2*'s home-ent release, though more than one person mistook it for a different saga… "Why has Chewie's face been stretched into a book cover? #poaching" (@tasker_luke)



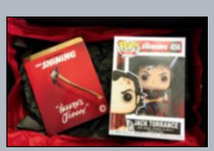
DELIVER US CAKE
bit.ly/2z2U0xv
It wasn't the biggest cake we received this month, but this edible crucifix certainly was the vegan-ist. Marking the DVD of exorcism doc *Deliver Us*, it arrived on Halloween to cure some ominous tummy rumbles.



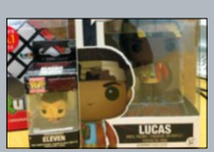
SOLO TITLE REVEAL: DISCUSS
bit.ly/2zouSVa
"Should have been 'I Shot First'" (@IanYamagata); "I was hoping for 'Chewbacca To The Future'" (Paul Spencer); "The Falcon Menace" (Gordon King); "If it's a good film, who gives a shit?" (Wayne Griffith).



IT COMES AT NIGHT KIT
bit.ly/2xMmKJp
It's been quite boysy in the *TF* bunker for the past few weeks, so the gas mask came as a somewhat welcome gift as part of a post-apocalyptic package for survival horror *It Comes At Night*. He who smelt it…



THE SHINING GOODIES
bit.ly/2h3Pjiu
"Not too sure if this really is one for the kids this Christmas," tweeted @jinx2001 eyeing our new Jack Torrance figure (note 'red rum' on the box – nice). "At least start them off by watching the film first!"



STRANGER THINGS THINGS
bit.ly/2zXmzvF
More Funko figures; this time it's *ST*'s Lucas (looking ready for a *Red Dawn*), plus our '80s nemesis the Rubik's Cube. We haven't lost the knack: just a few shifted-around stickers and all done!

GETTY



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HAN SHOT FIRST! Reader reactions are mixed for *Blade Runner 2049*.

have stretched to 1,000 characters, though doing that amount of covers might've sent the art ed into a fury that made Begbie look like WALL·E.

KEEPING TRACK

As I sit in my armchair, under a blanket with a glass of red wine (it's cold), I am reading *Total Film* and to my dismay, you seem to have missed one of the best tracking shots [*Top 10*, TF265]. I have a soft spot for this film as a slasher fan, but the opening tracking shot in *Sorority Row* (2009) is genius. We weave through minor characters, lovers and party-goers to meet the film's leading ladies… I just think it's a great shot. And we also pass the much-missed Carrie Fisher hiding in the kitchen. Brilliant. Great film too. End of rant.



SCOTT READING, LONDON

A fair shout there, Scott – though if *Dialogue* had to go for an extra shot it'd probably be *Warrior King* (2005), where Tony Jaa kicks, punches, gouges, elbows, slaps and tickles his way up several flights of stairs. Probably could have saved himself the hassle by grabbing the lift, but the elevator guy's loss is violent spectacle's gain.

DECKARD TIMES

Blade Runner 2049 is probably the best science-fiction film since *The Matrix*, which is some feat considering it could've easily been another disappointing belated sequel. To have made a follow-up to the most groundbreaking SF film of all time 35 years later was a hugely risky endeavour. But to have made a sequel that is an EQUAL to the original in a similar way to *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Aliens* and *Terminator 2* is mind-blowing. Which makes its US box-office underperformance all the more shocking. It seems there's only one Deckard that American audiences will line up for… and it ain't Harrison Ford!

Maybe *BR3* should be *Blade Runner & The Furious* = $232m opening.

PETE, CARDIFF

Off the back of your glowing five-star review, I decided to brave the hordes of texting teenagers at my local multiplex and go see *Blade Runner 2049*. What a mistake! It's got to be the most overlong, plodding snoozefest I have sat through in yonks. Harrison Ford does very little and doesn't exactly bother rocking up early in the story. I'm sorry, I'm a massive fan of the original, but number two gets a huge 'no-no' from me. If you want to watch a half-decent sequel to a decades-old cult sci-fi classic then check out *Death Race 2050*. You'll defo get more laughs!!

PHIL SLOAN, BEXLEY

HAVE YOUR SAY
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Last night I finally saw *Blade Runner 2049*. I thought it was superb, and especially liked the bit where Deckard's son swung through the trees with all the monkeys and then they found the glass skull and then all the aliens arrived.

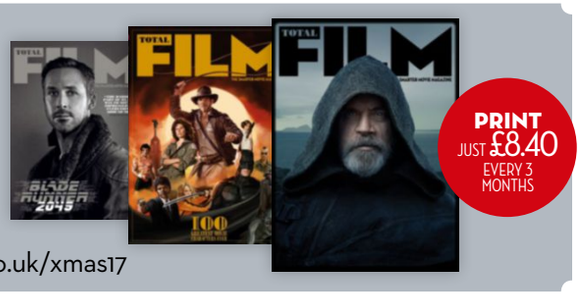
ALEX COLLIER, DURHAM

Yes, the bit where Dave Bautista attempted to find a fridge big enough to hide in was certainly a keeper. Have to say, our *Death Race* of choice would be the one where 'other Deckard' Jason Statham plays real-life *Super Mario Kart* for two splattery hours. As for texting teens… guess we should be thankful it's not 2049 and the kidz aren't stealing your seat for their holographic companions whenever you nip to the loo.

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TEASERS

COMING ATTRACTIONS

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EDITED BY JORDAN FARLEY



EXCLUSIVE

MYTH BUSTER

DARKEST HOUR | Director Joe Wright teams up with Gary Oldman for a personal and powerful portrait of British icon Winston Churchill.

"Hold on," says Joe Wright, thumbing through his iPhone, "I'll see if I can find it." The British director behind *Anna Karenina*, *Pride & Prejudice* and *Hanna* is searching for some behind-the-scenes footage of his latest film, Winston Churchill drama *Darkest Hour*. "Back, back, back, back, back," he continues, skimming through personal pictures and videos. "No, you can't see that one… there's Christmas, still Christmas… there you go."

As the video plays, *Teasers* gets a unique glimpse into Wright's methods. In the House of Parliament set, brilliantly mocked up by the director's regular production designer Sarah Greenwood, several hundred extras – all playing MPs – are delivering a rousing chorus of The Beatles' 'Hey Jude', before Wright's Churchill, Gary Oldman, walks in to rapturous cheers. Making sure the extras are "fully engaged" was vital, says Wright. "If you get them working, then you get the whole thing working."

It certainly points to Wright's attention to detail in a film that could so easily have been derailed by not one but two other movies this year. Already released is *Churchill* with Brian Cox – which, like *Darkest Hour*, deals with the newly appointed prime minister's crucial early days in May 1940, just months after the outbreak of WW2 – and Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*, which took the Tommy's eye view of the Churchill-organised evacuations from the beaches in Normandy.

"It's a very strange piece of timing," says Wright, who previously touched on the Dunkirk evacuation himself with his famous tracking shot along the beach in his adaptation of Ian McEwan's *Atonement* a decade ago.

DOWN THE TUBE
Gary Oldman dons prosthetics and puts in an awards-worthy performance as the WW2 leader.

"I must admit I was nervous to go and see Nolan's movie. I avoided seeing it until I'd finished the edit of ours. And was mighty relieved that there wasn't an overlap and thrilled by the film. I think it's a fantastic piece of work."

This time, Wright wanted to avoid the beaches (and any clash with Nolan's movie) and take us back to England, to the heart of government, where Churchill is forced to fight off political machinations from the likes of Viscount Halifax and Neville Chamberlain, who had just resigned as PM, pushing for negotiations with the Germans. "I wasn't aware how close we came to making a peace deal," says Wright. "I wasn't aware that Churchill really considered it."

While Nolan's *Dunkirk* is very much an action movie, Wright's film – scripted by Anthony McCarten (*The Theory Of Everything*) – is much more dialogue-driven. "I personally find the relations between humans far more tense, fraught and fascinating than guns and bombs and all of that stuff. I'm fascinated by how we relate to each other. The stakes couldn't be higher. The level of suspense I felt when reading the script was dramatic and I was excited to try and achieve that."

'I WANTED TO RECLAIM HIM, TAKE HIM DOWN FROM THE PLINTH, AND EXAMINE THE MAN'
JOE WRIGHT

At the heart of *Darkest Hour* is a sensational turn by Oldman, who disappears into Churchill just as he did playing Sid Vicious (*Sid And Nancy*) or Joe Orton (*Prick Up Your Ears*) at the outset of his career. Spending three-and-a-half hours a day in make-up, Oldman carried around half his bodyweight in prosthetics, which had been designed by out-of-retirement genius Kazuhiro Tsuji (*Looper*) over a five-month period before shooting.

During this time, Oldman and Wright started working on the character – "Thinking about how he breathed and how he walked and how he spoke." But it was on the day of the cast table-read that it really hit home. "Gary said, 'You know what? I think I might get into costume and make-up.' And he walked in the room and all the actors turned and saw him and literally gasped. Then we read the script, and he was just magnificent. Not all the choices were there yet but there was the essence of Churchill that was undeniable."

Naturally, the intense Oldman took it to extremes. "Gary actually got stomach poisoning from all the cigars he had to smoke!" reveals Wright, who hopes that his lead gets the Academy recognition a performance like this merits. "I think he deserves the highest accolades, as an actor, for an overall career, that our industry can bestow. He's an extraordinary artist and someone who is one of a kind really."

Oldman isn't the only actor on top form though: witness Kristin Scott Thomas as Churchill's wife Clementine; Lily James as his courageous secretary Elizabeth; and Australian *Rogue One* star Ben Mendelsohn as King George VI, Britain's stutter-afflicted monarch already captured on film by Colin Firth in *The King's Speech*. Casting a non-Brit was key, says Wright, "so they wouldn't come with that cultural baggage that so many British would have come with".

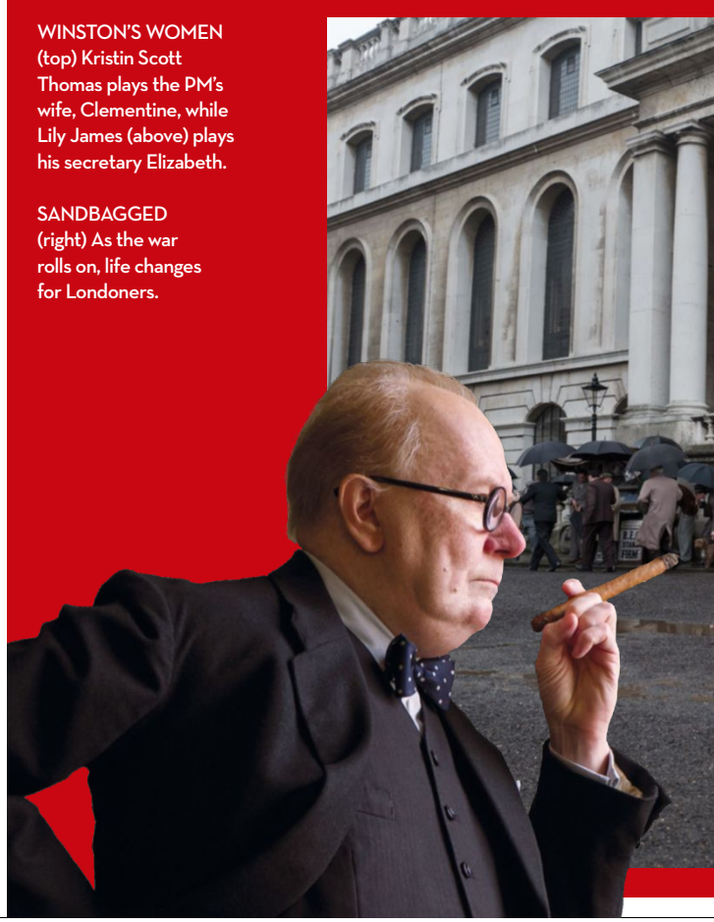
With Winston Churchill frequently named the most important or influential Briton of the 20th Century in polls, Wright was keen to dig deep and examine the man behind that infamous V for Victory sign. "I wanted to reclaim him, take him down from the plinth, and examine the man. I think it's very dangerous to canonise our leaders or celebrities. We need to address them as human beings and then we can learn from them."

So what did he learn from Churchill, a man many considered reckless and booze-addled? "I learnt that he was deeply flawed, he made many mistakes and yet – perhaps because of or in spite of – he overcame those failures to achieve possibly the greatest service to Britain and democracy that any leader has shown." In the darkest hour, he illuminated the nation's indefatigable spirit. ***JM***

ETA | 12 JANUARY 2018 / DARKEST HOUR OPENS NEXT YEAR.







WINSTON'S WOMEN (top) Kristin Scott Thomas plays the PM's wife, Clementine, while Lily James (above) plays his secretary Elizabeth.

SANDBAGGED (right) As the war rolls on, life changes for Londoners.







V FOR VICTORY (top) *Darkest Hour* covers Churchill's struggles to take charge of the country.

THE BIG SMOKE (above) Oldman made himself ill from smoking so many of Churchill's famous cigars.

HOT RIGHT NOW

OLIVIA COOKE

PLAYING IN THE BIG LEAGUE...

It was so funny, because when you're a kid you're like, 'I'm going to be an actress and I'm going to work with Steven Spielberg,'" says Olivia Cooke of her major role in Spielberg's adaptation of Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One*. "And then you're actually doing it..."

Dazed though she seems, the Oldham-born 23-year-old should indeed be ready after several wide-ranging genre and indie roles. Following "cringey adverts and modelling jobs" in her teens, rejection from RADA couldn't stall her momentum. She starred with Christopher Eccleston in her TV debut, *Blackout*, before a stand-out in Hammer-slammer *The Quiet Ones* ushered in a slew of horror gigs. She revisited horror in 2017's *The Limehouse Golem*, though her breakout came in *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl*, where she refused a bald cap for fear of feeling "phony" as a girl with cancer. "I was like, 'Just fucking shave my head.'"

Besides the similarly forthright Emma in TV's *Bates Motel*, Cooke brought grounding work to the "super low-budget" *Katie Says Goodbye* as a waitress/prostitute. She also stretched herself for a killer pairing with *The Witch*'s Anya Taylor-Joy in deliciously dark Sundance hit *Thoroughbreds*. "I usually play hyper-emotional characters, so to play a character who's devoid of emotion and just a master manipulator was appealing."

Further into 2018, Cooke will blast to the 19th Century as Becky Sharp in TV adap *Vanity Fair*. And shoot to a dystopian virtual future as *Ready Player One*'s take-no-bull Art3mis, which required she rise to the demands of mega-scale shoots and surprise mega-star encounters. "I'm used to doing a two-month shoot where I am completely living in it," she says, "but this has definitely taught me how to endure and to focus." As for the visitors, "Steven would be like, 'Olivia, I just want you to come and meet Tom Cruise, my good friend.' And I'd be like, 'Oh, great.' Standard!" For the increasingly durable Cooke, it surely soon will be. ***KH***

ETA | MARCH 2018 / READY PLAYER ONE AND THOROUGHBREDS OPEN NEXT YEAR.



MAARTEN DE BOER / CONTOUR BY GETTY



EXCLUSIVE

PAPER CHASE

THE POST | Spielberg, Streep and Hanks leak the real story behind Watergate...

Stop the press! Steven Spielberg's latest passion project *The Post* takes us back to 1971 to tell the story of America's first female news publisher Kay Graham (Meryl Streep) and her struggle to release the controversial Pentagon Papers. "It's about a woman who goes from being a mouse to being a lion," explains über producer Amy Pascal. "Katharine Graham took over *The Washington Post* when her husband died. She's faced with making one of the great decisions about protecting the First Amendment when there was everything for her to lose if she made the wrong choice."

Together with hard-nosed editor Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks), Graham published the Watergate-exposing reports of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, as detailed in Alan J. Pakula classic *All The President's Men*.

This proto-whistleblowing event would forever change the relationship between the media and the government. "It's also a universal story about change," suggests fellow producer Kristie Macosko. As Pascal points out, "At the time, there was a cosier relationship between the government and reporters and this was the first time that reporters realised the government wasn't telling them the truth. That was something that had been unquestioned until the release of the Pentagon Papers."

Politics aside, *The Post* also marks the first collaboration between Spielberg, Hanks and Streep. "They'd never worked together so they were all pretty excited. It was really fun to watch," smiles Pascal. Hanks, following in the footsteps of *All The President's Men*'s Jason Robards, went the extra mile to play Bradlee by studying the man and his mannerisms. "He became Ben Bradlee," recalls Macosko. "It was like a metamorphosis and there were times when he would be on set and I would think I was looking at Ben Bradlee. It would be shocking that it was actually Tom Hanks." Streep, for her part, was equally committed. "Meryl is one of our greatest actors," says Pascal. "The first time anybody saw Meryl as Katharine, she walked onto set and everyone was just gobsmacked, she looked so much like her. She just was her essence."

Despite being shot after Spielberg's upcoming geek-epic *Ready Player One*, *The Post* hits screens first, which begs the question: how does he fit it all in? "We were just going on our way making our big little movie *Ready Player One* and this kind of fell into our lap," remembers Macosko, before alluding to the film's contemporary relevance. "Steven thought it was important to get this movie made and get it made quickly." Pascal shares the sentiment, "I think sometimes talking about the present by talking about the past can be very effective." ***SB***

'GATE CRASHERS Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep as the *Washington Post*'s legendary editor and publisher, Ben Bradlee and Kay Graham.

ETA | 19 JANUARY / THE POST OPENS NEXT YEAR.



YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

Film quotes pose as questions. Film stars try to cope.

IN THE CROSSHAIRS THIS MONTH: JOHN CENA

You talkin' to me?
Yes, I am. I'm fortunate enough to be talking to you about a wonderful film called *Ferdinand*, which is something that, even if you're in a bad mood, will warm you up.

Do you feel lucky punk?
I feel really lucky. I guess luck is preparation meeting opportunity? And I really did a lot of work trying to make *Ferdinand* the best that I could. You watch this movie and you're taken away to this whimsical universe in the midst of Spain and all its beauty…

You talk the talk. Do you walk the walk?
I think if you look at what I do in the WWE, it's safe to say I can walk the walk.

You either surf or fight…
I'm gonna choose 'fight' because at least I've got a coin-flip's chance of winning. If you put me on a surfboard, you might as well be throwing an elephant on that thing. Skiing, rollerblading, skating, surfing… those are things that don't mesh well with me.

What's the last thing that you do remember?
Aside from this awesome interview? Being lucky enough to spend the evening with my bride-to-be. It was unexpected and was a very nice surprise.

Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?
I've had more of those dances than I think anybody would realise because of essentially putting my health on the line five times a week. But I enjoy the razor's edge of it all. It set me up to want to challenge myself and not be afraid to dance those dangerous dances.

Do you ever have that feeling where you're not sure if you're awake or still dreaming?
Every single day because if you asked me 20 years ago about any of this, this was a dream. So I live a dream every single day. I don't ever lose perspective of that.



'THERE'S HUMOUR IN SELF-DEPRECATION, ESPECIALLY AS A STOIC-LOOKING BADASS'

Why so serious?
I enjoy making fun of myself. I think there's a lot of humour in self-deprecation, especially when you have the appearance of this stoic-looking badass. I think there's a lot of humour in the insecurities that go with that.

What's your favourite scary movie?
Man, I always like *A Nightmare On Elm Street*. Just the whole concept of it: a guy making it out of a house fire and coming back to haunt the neighbourhood and get inside kids' dreams? It became an awesome horror stunt show, but the first one was super-scary to me as a young kid.

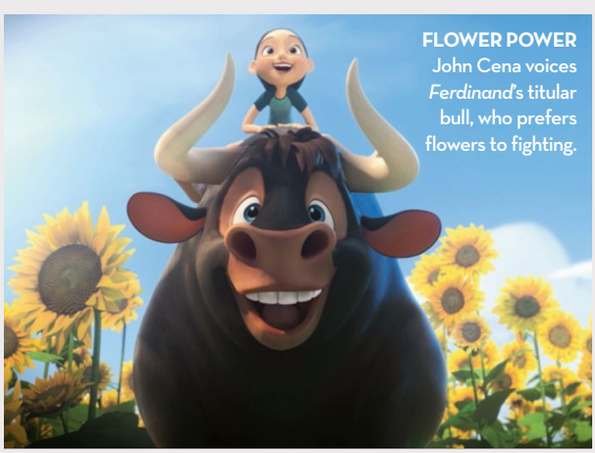
If you could change something in your life, anything at all, what would it be?
I would ask for more hours in the day so that I could maybe get some rest, but I just have a feeling I would only do more stuff.

Do you like what you do for a living? These things you see?
I was just fortunate enough to see *Ferdinand* last week and it's really, really well done. It had me laughing, it had me crying, it had me super-invested. They knocked it out of the park. I'm just along for the ride on this one, so I'm very, very happy.

I know you can be overwhelmed, and you can be underwhelmed, but can you ever just be whelmed?
The entertainment business is extremely fickle. It's not a job where you can clock in until you're 65 and claim your pension. It can be here today and gone tomorrow, so you have to appreciate what you have and you have to constantly work like it's your first day on the job.

You're being an asshole, alright? You know what I do with assholes? I lick 'em…
The character in *Trainwreck* was originally just written as a physically imposing guy. I was like, "OK, this guy really works hard to keep in shape, he always talks about being at the gym with his friends, he really does want a family and a white picket fence but I think he is totally sexually confused. I'm gonna go with that." Judd [*Apatow*] and Amy [*Schumer*] allowed me to take those chances and then it was like "let's just *Spinal Tap* it and turn it up to 11". ***MLo***

ETA | 16 DECEMBER / FERDINAND OPENS NEXT MONTH.



FLOWER POWER John Cena voices *Ferdinand*'s titular bull, who prefers flowers to fighting.

GETTY

Questions: Taxi Driver, Dirty Harry, Full Metal Jacket, Apocalypse Now, Memento, Batman, The Matrix, The Dark Knight, Scream, The Sixth Sense, Se7en, 10 Things I Hate About You, Trainwreck



EXCLUSIVE

MOTHER FOR JUSTICE

THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI | Martin McDonagh returns with a southern-set tale of motherly pain...

A happy set doesn't always make a great movie, but not so with Martin McDonagh's latest, the brilliant *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*. The Irish playwright turned writer-director is in a buoyant mood when *Teasers* meets him in Venice. "This one was great fun, with no interference from any financial people, as there usually is," he grins. "There was no pulling hair out or fights with the actors."

While you're left wondering who McDonagh scrapped with on his earlier movies *In Bruges* and *Seven Psychopaths*, *Three Billboards...* has been scooping prizes – Best Screenplay in Venice, People's Choice in Toronto – despite the grim subject matter. Frances McDormand plays Mildred, a Missouri mother who rents the titular ad space to force the local cops – led by Woody Harrelson's sheriff – into stepping up their investigation into the rape and murder of her daughter.

In McDonagh's eyes, the "germ of the story" was a character study of a woman dumbstruck by grief and anguish, desperate to find closure on her offspring's unsolved death. "Mildred doesn't start from a place of hate; a place of anger, sure, and sadness and rage, but it's not hate," he notes. "It's almost clinically moving forward and reacting to anything that comes her way."

With the film also dealing with bigotry in the police force (notably via Sam Rockwell's not-so-able deputy), critics have inevitably related it to recent US tensions. But McDonagh is cautious on this; written eight years ago, *Three Billboards* "hasn't been created in response to anything that's been going on in the last year or two".

For all its twisted qualities – jet-black humour very much in evidence – it's also hugely poignant. "To a degree, there is no solution to the thing Mildred is needing a solution for," says the Irish filmmaker. "That prompts a sadness. I find the film quite sad but hopefully moving too. Being true to her sadness and her struggle was number one priority for me. Cynicism wasn't a possible fallback position." *JM*

ETA | 12 JANUARY / THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI OPENS NEXT YEAR.

PLEA BARGAIN Woody Harrelson's Sheriff Willoughby implores Frances McDormand's mother of a victim to ease off on her ad campaign.



Q&A SAM ROCKWELL

How do you see your character Jason Dixon? As a bad guy?
This guy is more of an antihero than a baddie.

Did you know this region of the USA particularly well?
My girlfriend is from the south and I had an ex-girlfriend from Georgia... and I grew up on westerns and watching cinematic hillbillies. I found it fascinating to research. I went down to Missouri to meet some of the cops. It's great stuff, man. It's really rich material.

What were they like?
These guys were very decent people, they were not racist cops, but as we know they do exist. A lot of the cops are [*physically*] big. So we got some padding and I drank some beer! Also, Martin and I had a whole discussion about the hair. He wanted slightly longer hair, I wanted it shorter, because all these cops have really short military-like cuts. We talked about that a lot.



Did the cops show you how to physically apprehend someone?
Yeah, I had a guy take me down. I wanted to know what that was like. He really fucking got into me. It hurt. And he was taking it easy, doing it Hollywood-style! *JM*

GETTY



EXCLUSIVE

HELL TO PAY

ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD | Mark Wahlberg on the role that's unlike anything he's done before in Ridley Scott's true-life thriller...

After crafting a full-scale interstellar blockbuster, you wouldn't need permission to take a bit of a breather. Perhaps someone needs to have a word with workaholic director Ridley Scott (who turns 80 this month), as he has quietly knocked up an intriguing, inspired-by-a-true-story '70s crime thriller since wrapping *Alien: Covenant*. Filmed over the summer in Italy, the UK and Jordan, *All The Money In The World* tells the story of the kidnapping of the teenage grandson of oil billionaire (and then richest man in the world) Jean Paul Getty.

"I've always been a huge fan of Ridley's, and reading this script and seeing the part – which is not something that people would expect from me – I just felt like it was too good of an opportunity to pass up," explains Mark Wahlberg, who plays Getty's right-hand-man and former CIA agent Fletcher Chase, who's called into action to work with the missing Jean Paul III's mother, Gail (Michelle Williams), when Getty the elder refuses to pay the ransom. "He was a former CIA guy," says Wahlberg of Chase. "And then he was basically negotiating with various countries in the Middle East and handling the oil business for Getty. But, if something went wrong, he was the guy Getty would call."

While Wahlberg's hands were somewhat tied when it came to research – "He's a former CIA guy, so it was difficult to find even pictures of him..." – he relished the opportunity to break from the taciturn tough guys he's known for. "Everything about him [*is different to characters I've played*]. This guy is fluent in Arabic. He speaks Italian. The way he walks, talks, dresses... He's a unique individual."

If Wahlberg's somewhat unrecognisable in the role, it's nothing compared to co-star Kevin Spacey, who plays the ageing Getty under pounds of prosthetics. "The first time that I saw him, in Italy, he was in the make-up, walking towards me," says Wahlberg. "Most of the time I spent with him was with him in the make-up on set, in character. It's funny because obviously he would sound different during the take doing his Getty voice. But when we were just talking... It was weird with his voice coming out of that face."

With Wahlberg pointing to the complexities of Getty himself, you can expect a stylised thriller that leaves you with a lot to chew on. "It became probably my greatest cinematic experience," reflects Wahlberg. "It felt like making one of those movies that I grew up watching with my dad." *MM*

ETA | 5 JANUARY / ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD OPENS NEXT YEAR.



'IT BECAME PROBABLY MY GREATEST CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE'
MARK WAHLBERG



EXCLUSIVE

CURTAIN CALL

PITCH PERFECT 3 | The Bellas are back for the aca-farewell tour...

Having single-handedly succeeded in making a cappella cool, earning the title of highest grossing musical comedy Stateside in the process (the sequel took $184m in the US), the *Pitch Perfect* series could happily rest on its laurels and watch the blockbuster bucks roll in. But imminent trilogy-capper *Pitch Perfect 3* breaks up the harmony in a shocking way – by introducing musical instruments.

"I hope the fans are OK with that," laughs director Trish Sie, a former music video helmer turned feature filmmaker. "The *Pitch Perfect* movies get away with so much absurdity, because there's something honest about them. However, we would be doing it a disservice if we pretended that, outside of college, a cappella means that much!"

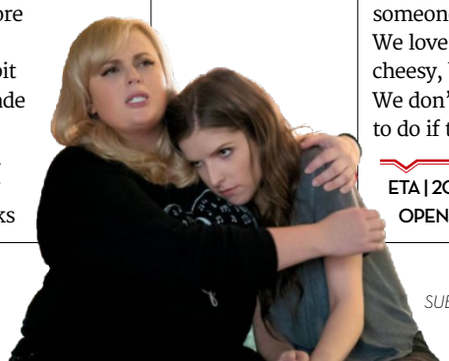
With the Barden Bellas now Barden graduates, the lives of Beca (Anna Kendrick), Fat Amy (Rebel Wilson) and the acoustic sisterhood haven't turned out as planned. Scattered across the country, and working dead-end jobs, it's not long before the Bellas realise what's missing from their lives. "That's where we came up with the idea that they get an opportunity to sing together out of college," Sie explains. "Most likely it's not going to be on some worldwide a cappella tour; it's going to be a USO show, where other bands have instruments. Like the rest of our story, they are suddenly in the real world, where the a cappella band is the outlier."

A fan of the series before signing on to direct the threequel ("I was a little bit enraged that I had not made that movie myself!"), Sie pursued the hottest gig in a capella after *Pitch Perfect 2*'s helmer Elizabeth Banks stepped aside from directing duties. "Trish is a powerhouse," say Brittany Snow, who plays peacekeeper Chloe. "There aren't many people that could take on a task this large, with 10 girls, all different types of personalities, and a lot of expectations, and still maintain her own take. But she let us do whatever we wanted. We improv'd maybe 80 per cent of the movie."

Possessing a definitive tagline – 'Last Call Pitches' – and with the Bellas now small fish in a much larger pond, it would seem the writing's on the wall for the aca-underdogs. "We certainly wanted to tie up this stage of the franchise, in the sense that the Bellas have graduated college, they have gone through that treacherous time of transitioning to the real world and they are setting out on new adventures," Sie confirms.

Snow, however, isn't ruling out an encore. "We have decided that if someone asks us to do it again, we will. We love doing these movies. It's so cheesy, but we've become this family. We don't really know what we're going to do if the movies just stop." ***JF***

SWAN SONG? Brittany Snow, Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson and the rest of their sisters in song return for what could be their final show... maybe.



ETA | 20 DECEMBER / PITCH PERFECT 3 OPENS NEXT MONTH.

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THE NEXT BIG THING

JASON MITCHELL

IS BOUND FOR GLORY.

After breaking out with a blistering turn as Eazy-E in *Straight Outta Compton*, Jason Mitchell has followed up with the varied likes of *Detroit*, *Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams* and *Kong: Skull Island*, and will next be seen in Dee Rees' powerhouse World War 2 drama, *Mudbound* (reviewed on page 115). The only way is up, it seems. "I'm good," grins Mitchell. "Life is delicious right now."

How did *Mudbound* come to you?
Actually, Dee Rees had sort of a wish list for the film. I was at the top of it. That was kind of freaky to me that people even thought of me in that light. I didn't know that me doing my thing would attract so many opportunities.

One of the key relationships in the film is between your character and Garrett Hedlund's. Did you bond in real life?
Absolutely. Garrett is my guy. We spent a lot of time off-camera together. Oddly, because I'm not one of those guys who goes over their lines over weekends… [*laughs*] But he actually got me to study it and get a real feel for what we're trying to do. He was very dedicated.

***Mudbound*, *Straight Outta Compton*, *Detroit*… Have you actively sought period pieces that are relevant to modern times?**
It's more of a coincidence. I honestly don't have the power to say what's going to be made, when it's going to come out. I just happened to have these opportunities fall into place. It's really cool to challenge yourself and go as far as you can.

You've done serious drama, TV, blockbusters… Is there anything on your bucket list you'd still love to do?
I really just want to get into production and writing and all these different things. Because I'm a super-raw cat. So it would be really, really dope to take what's in my head and put it out there in the world. *MM*

ETA | 17 NOVEMBER / MUDBOUND IS ON NETFLIX NOW.

REX



EXCLUSIVE

BEAST MASTER

THE SHAPE OF WATER | Guillermo del Toro on the making of his latest magical movie monster...

When Guillermo del Toro was six years old, he watched Universal monster movie *Creature From The Black Lagoon* and fell in love – with the movie, with leading lady Julie Adams, and, this being del Toro, with the creature itself.

"I saw the creature swimming under Julie Adams, in her white suit," he says, sharing a packet of crisps with *Total Film* in a London hotel, "and even at six, I just thought, 'My God, she's gorgeous.' And then I looked at the creature, and I thought, 'My God, *he's* gorgeous.' And then I thought, 'My God, it's gorgeous that they're in love. This is such a beautiful movie.'"

Now 53, del Toro still cites *Creature* as one of his favourite pictures, and was even attached to remake it at one point. *The Shape Of Water*, set in and around a government laboratory in Cold War America, is, at least in part, an ode to Jack Arnold's poetic fantasy, with Sally Hawkins' mute Elisa falling in love with Doug Jones' amphibian beast.

To hone the homage, Amphibian Man, as he's listed in *The Shape Of Water*'s credits, was captured in South America, home of Arnold's lagoon-dwelling creature Gill Man. He's far from a copy, mind...

"I felt we were not designing a creature, we were designing a leading man, because this creature is someone who needs to display doubt, anger, loneliness, brutality, power," says del Toro, who ploughed $200,000 of his own money into pre-production. "It's difficult to find an actor with that range. And if that actor is covered in rubber..." He laughs. "I started at home with two sculptors, David Meng and David Grasso. Many busts, full figures. Then Legacy did a full maquette with a glowing bioluminescence paint job. I studied it and studied it. And then I called [*creature effects technician*] Mike Hill, who became the father [*of*] the creature."

MONSTROUS Sally Hawkins plays Elisa, with Doug Jones as the Amphibian Man, discovered by Michael Shannon's Strickland (below).



Amphibian Man took three years to create, but only one actor was ever going to bring him to life: Doug Jones, who'd previously worked with del Toro on *Mimic*, the *Hellboy* movies, *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Crimson Peak*.

Del Toro grins. "It had to be Doug because he is not a performer, he is a proper actor." Good job, too, as del Toro wanted zero overlap with Jones' other fishy form, Abe Sapien. "I said, 'Doug, you have to act completely un-Doug-Jones-like. You cannot be mannered. You cannot be fluid. You have to be very powerful, very animalistic, with a strong centre, like a bullfight. And you have to also be able to be vulnerable and afraid."

The result is a man-made monster we can all embrace. ***JG***

ETA | 16 FEBRUARY / THE SHAPE OF WATER OPENS NEXT YEAR.

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SOUND BYTES

Quotable dialogue from this month's movies – and their stars

"I JUST ALWAYS HOPE THAT GOD IS A MOVIE FAN AND ALSO FORGIVING, BECAUSE I'VE MADE SOME POOR CHOICES IN MY PAST. *BOOGIE NIGHTS* IS UP THERE AT THE TOP OF THE LIST."



Mark Wahlberg regrets getting his Dirk Diggler out.

"HE MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE CURRENT CONFLUENCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND THE USE AND MISUSE OF TECHNOLOGY... AND HE MIGHT PUT ON A NICE DARK BIT OF CLOTHING HERE AND THERE. A BIT OF TINTED GLASS MAYBE."



Jeff Goldblum teases Ian Malcolm's return in *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*.



RETURN OF THE KING(PIN)
After a brief appearance in Season 2, Vincent D'Onofrio's Kingpin will be back for *Daredevil*'s upcoming third season.

GOOD THING

BAD THING

THE LOST JEDI
Visceral's promising, story-driven *Star Wars* game has been canned. Codenamed 'Ragtag', it was set between *Eps IV* and *V*.

"WE REALISED THAT, ACTUALLY, THERE IS NO WAY THAT WONDER WOMAN WOULD EVER GIVE UP ON MANKIND."

Gal Gadot on Wonder Woman's change of heart.



80%

The amount of *Solo: A Star Wars Story* Ron Howard is rumoured to have re-shot.

£630,000

THE COST OF AUDREY HEPBURN'S PERSONAL SHOOTING SCRIPT FOR *BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S* AT AUCTION.

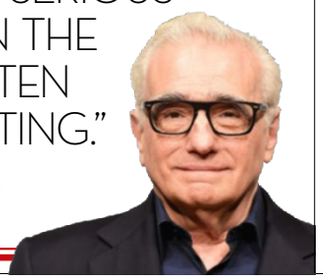


"IF YOU THINK A PRINCESS CAN DO WHAT I DID, YOU'RE INCORRECT."

Molly Bloom (**Jessica Chastain**) is no princess in *Molly's Game*.



"AGGREGATORS HAVE SET A TONE THAT IS HOSTILE TO SERIOUS FILMMAKERS – EVEN THE ACTUAL NAME ROTTEN TOMATOES IS INSULTING."

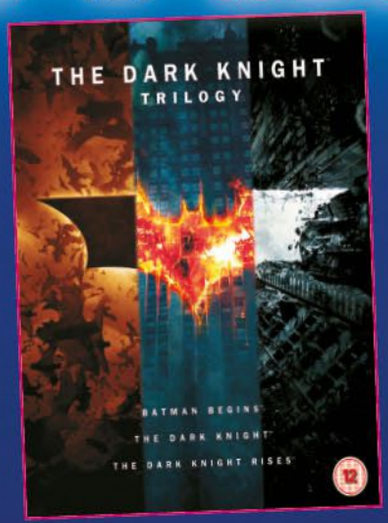


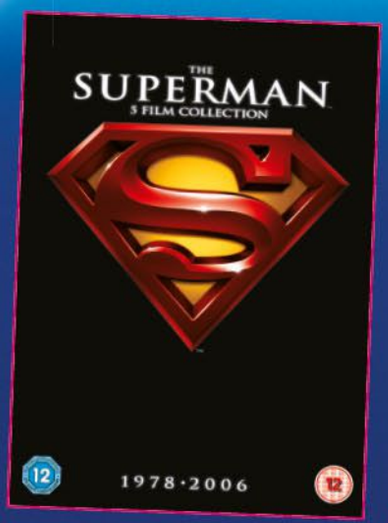
Martin Scorsese has a fresh take on Rotten Tomatoes.

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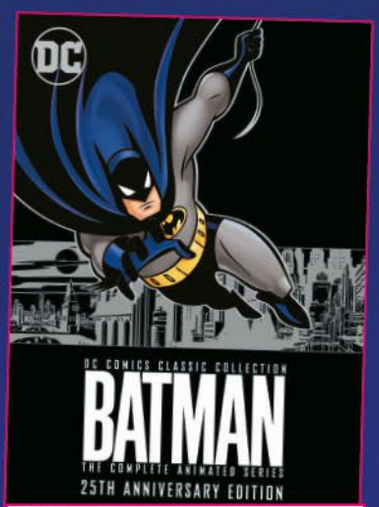




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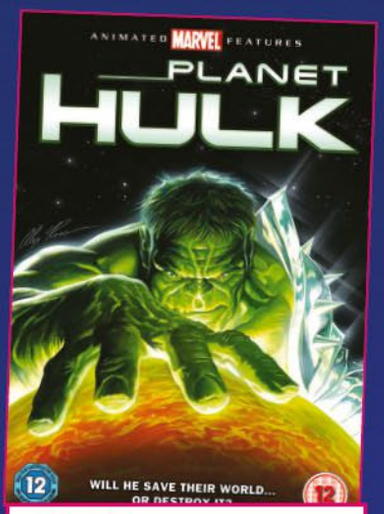
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SHORT CUTS

The latest happenings in movieland...



SHAW THING

Who said family ran smooth? With *Fast & Furious 9* pushed back a year to 2020, Universal has steered a spin-off into the gap for Dwayne Johnson's Hobbs and Jason Statham's well-'ard Deckard Shaw. Despite Tyrese Gibson's Insta-gripes, El Rock promises something – what else? – "fresh and badass".

DEATHSTROKE OF LUCK

The Raid's Gareth Evans is in chats to make a Deathstroke film. The Batman/Arrow assassin was mooted for Ben Affleck's *Batman* movie, before Matt Reeves replaced Affleck as director. After appearing on Affleck's Twitter as 'Stroke, Joe Manganiello may still lead Evans' film.

X-TRA TIME

After helping lay old man Logan to rest, Laura Kinney lives on. *Logan* writer/director James Mangold and character creator Craig Kyle are developing an X-23 spin-off. Star Dafne Keen's involvement is unconfirmed; meanwhile, matters X-related continue in 2018 with *Dark Phoenix* and *The New Mutants*.

GETTING STRONGER

Sylvester Stallone will produce, direct and star in *Creed 2*, shooting next year. We await word on why *Creed*'s Ryan Coogler isn't directing, but Michael B. Jordan will return as Adonis. Going by Sly's past comments, could son-of-Creed be lamping Russians this time?





MY MOVIE LIFE

The films that upset, scare and amuse **Rupert Grint**...



THE FIRST FILM I EVER SAW

I remember the first movie I saw in the cinema. I have quite a clear memory of that. It was MRS. DOUBTFIRE. It's quite hazy and I haven't seen it in a long time, I just remember the scene where his breasts catch fire and he's swatting them with a spatula. Weirdly, it was Chris Columbus who filmed that and he was the first director I worked with as well [*on* Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone] so it was kind of a weird parallel. I've always had fairly unusual taste in films.



THE FILM THAT ALWAYS MAKES ME CRY

Do you know what, I have a bit of a stone heart when it comes to that kind of thing. I rarely cry at films. PAY IT FORWARD nearly had me going. It's just a bit of a shock I think. [The Sixth Sense*'s*] Haley Joel Osment dies at the end, that's probably a bit of a spoiler but it's one that nearly had me going. I'm trying to think of other ones but there aren't many. I occasionally get a lump in my throat but to get me to actually cry is difficult. I never really do that.



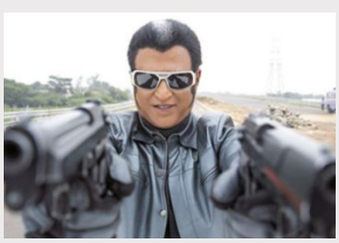
THE FILM I LOVE THAT NOBODY'S HEARD OF

It's a film called LITTLE OTIK [*also known as* Greedy Guts] and no one's ever heard of it. It's kind of a horror about this family that really wants a kid and through this kind of madness the mother gets really attached to a tree stump that's in the garden. She paints a face on it and treats it like her kid and then this tree stump comes to life and starts eating their cat and gradually eating all the people they know. It's really disturbing and pretty special.



THE FILM THAT ALWAYS SCARES ME

A film I've recently seen that I really enjoyed but was absolutely terrifying was called BE MY CAT. It's about a young filmmaker from Romania who's obsessed with Anne Hathaway and wants her to be in this film he's written. All throughout it he's talking through this camera to her about his film where he kidnaps a woman and makes her his cat. He hires actors to show her what it would be like working with him and it's absolutely terrifying. It's genuinely pretty uncomfortable to watch.



THE LAST FILM I WATCHED ON A PLANE

I occasionally watch Bollywood movies on flights. I find them kind of fascinating, they're such a different way of making a film and the structure of them is really interesting. One I saw recently was called ROBOT. It's quite a big budget Bollywood movie and it was really cool. I watch quite a lot of films on planes but a few times I've had to rewatch them because you just don't get the full experience. I watched *Inception* on a plane which didn't have the same effect at all.



THE FILM THAT ALWAYS MAKES ME LAUGH

I like a lot of old-school comedy. I love Peter Sellers and the *Arthur* films, but DUMB AND DUMBER – I always go back to that one. I think the writing was really good, I still find myself quoting it quite often, I think it really holds up. I could probably watch it all day. Maybe that's the film I'd take to a desert island, I could watch that one all the time. *SB*

SNATCH AIRS THURSDAYS ON AMC UK. SICK NOTE RETURNS TO SKY ONE LATER THIS MONTH.

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EXCLUSIVE

KING OF THE YARD

SHOT CALLER | Game Of Thrones' Nikolaj Coster-Waldau breaks bad in gritty prison drama...

The way violence breeds violence in prison is something we have to look at," says Ric Roman Waugh, the writer/director of socially conscious prison dramas *Felon* (2008), *Snitch* (2013) and now *Shot Caller*, in which Nikolaj Coster-Waldau's average Joe is forced into life as a hardened crim after a fatal accident leads to a stretch in the slammer. "Why do we have a system," asks the helmer, "that is turning lower-level offenders into ultra-violent offenders and better criminals?"

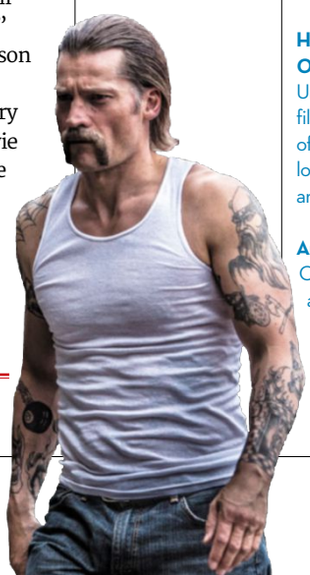
Waugh is better placed than most to answer. For 2008's *Felon* he went undercover as a volunteer parole agent in California to learn about the prison system first-hand. "They would give me the real stories about how you get desensitised, because everybody thought I was a rookie cop," Waugh recalls. "The only commodity you have left as a human being when you're incarcerated is your own respect, and the minute that respect is taken it can lead to super-violent conclusions."

To that end, *Shot Caller* sees Coster-Waldau's mild-mannered, law-abiding Jacob transform into 'Money' – a violent inmate – with the help of Jeffrey Donovan's 'Bottles' and Jon Bernthal's 'Shotgun'. But the story doesn't end when Jacob/Money leaves the yard. "That's what people have to understand about recidivism in prison," Waugh says. "They're reentering society as a different person."

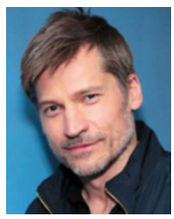
To play two sides of the same person, Waugh courted the man behind *Game Of Thrones*' reformed antihero Jaime Lannister, putting Coster-Waldau through 'prison school' in preparation. "He met real people on the street that had done a number of years – major, major shot callers," Waugh explains. "He saw the devil first-hand, staring opposite him."

With his loosely connected prison trilogy now complete, Waugh is venturing into blockbuster territory next with new Mike Banning movie *Angel Has Fallen*. "I want to be able to redefine the series, put it into a new stew," Waugh says. "More authenticity, more emotionally driven. I was really excited about getting to put my stamp on the franchise." ***JF***

ETA | 15 DECEMBER / SHOT CALLER OPENS NEXT MONTH.



CHANGING MAN Nikolaj Coster-Waldau's locked-up everyman, Jacob, reinvents himself as ultra-violent 'Money' to survive.



Q&A

NIKOLAJ COSTER-WALDAU

Jacob and Money are very distinct. Was it like playing two characters?
It was important that there was still a core left, so you could connect the dots. But there was almost no question that he changes. He has to learn very quickly to cover his emotions and make himself tough.

What did your research entail?
I met some former inmates. I was trying to understand that whole transformation. You enter a world where any sign of fear will get you into trouble, so you have to learn how to control those things. That was the key to getting this journey right.

How did you fit filming around *Game Of Thrones*?
Until now, it's been four or five months filming, and then you have seven, eight off. As we get to the end, it actually takes longer, because the action set-pieces are as big as any Hollywood movie.

Are you avoiding Jaime-like characters?
October 3 will be my 25th anniversary as an actor, and I don't think I've ever done the same thing twice. In the years of *Game Of Thrones*, I haven't done any movies where I was a knight or one-armed. I'm going to stay away from one-armed characters for a while. ***JF***

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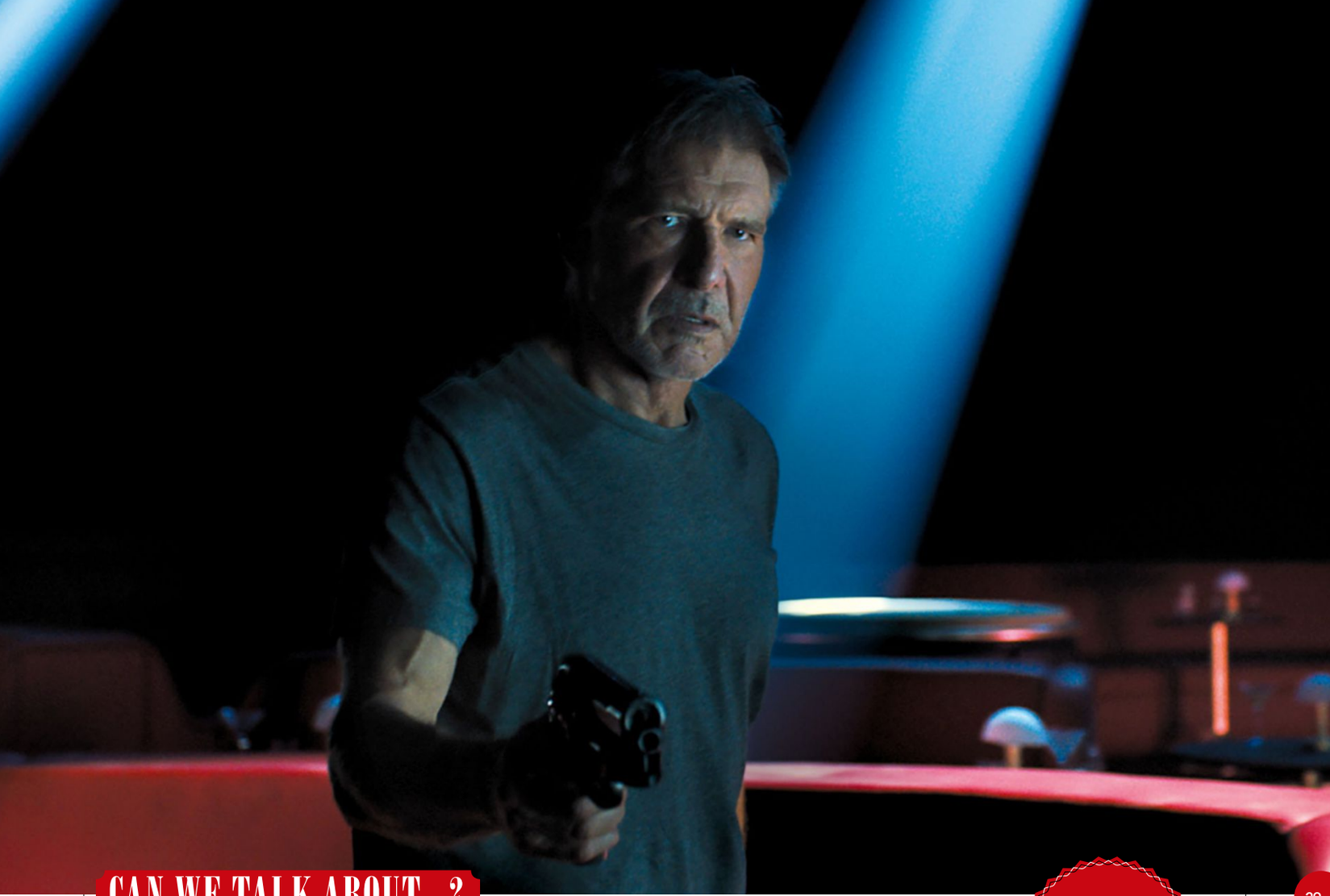
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CAN WE TALK ABOUT...?

BLADE RUNNER 2049'S BOX OFFICE

Should the publicity have publicised a little more?

SPOILER ALERT!

While shooting *Blade Runner 2049*, Jared Leto wore sight-limiting contacts to get under the skin of the blind Niander Wallace. Sadly, American audiences were less willing to follow the journey of Ryan Gosling's K partially plot-blind. Despite deservedly rapturous reviews, Denis Villeneuve's sumptuous, searching sequel replicated its predecessor's box-office burp, begging a question: did the publicity not light the way enough for newcomers to follow?

True, the 1982 original grew cult legs after its box-office miss. But *2049*'s returns ($223m worldwide, to date, on a $150m budget, pre-marketing) suggest not everyone has spent decades debating Deckard's identity. *2049* reaches beyond that issue, but its publicity left potential viewers with little to hang on. Gosling and Harrison Ford, though charming, certainly didn't give interviewers much.

So, K's nature was a repli-can't-tell-anyone secret, as was his discovery. Though the latter plot point should have remained secret, audiences perhaps needed something to draw them in, beyond a *La La Land*-ish ivory-tickling tease for Gos-watchers and some eye-ravishing world-building. Without much story to hand, newcomers' memory implants surely remained unsparked by back-referencing trailer lines such as, "Things were simpler then." Most ticket sales went to men over 25, who might always have seen it anyway.

'IT REMAINED PURE IN A CLIMATE WHERE TRAILERS TEASE EVERY ACT'



The ameliorating take-away from the secrecy is that *2049* remained pure for fans in a climate where lots of trailers tease every act in a film. As Villeneuve said, "People want to know too many things before." And revealing trailers aren't always bankers: *Alien: Covenant* under-performed, despite hatching its non-plot and prime shocks pre-release.

For wider non-initiates, perhaps *2049* would always have been a tricky sell. Long films don't always flop, so size alone can't be to blame. But the combination of time commitment and ambient dust around the plot with a dark vision, deep mythologies, divided opinions on the female roles, and a doleful Gos perhaps didn't help its break-out chances.

However you cut it, that box-office miss saddens because studios don't often risk sci-fi visions this thrillingly far-reaching. In short? Don't expect to find out what happened to Deck's dog in a hurry now. ***KH***

TOTAL FILM TOP 10

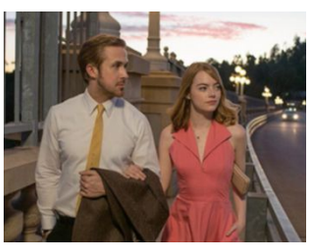
TF's ever-evolving 2017 movie league table...



01 DUNKIRK
Will Nolan's war movie hold the front until next issue's end-of-year top 10? Either way, repeat viewings don't lessen its sensory wallop.

02 BLADE RUNNER 2049

03 MOONLIGHT



04 LA LA LAND
Damien Chazelle's bittersweet beauty lit up January's murky skies. We're still humming its tune.

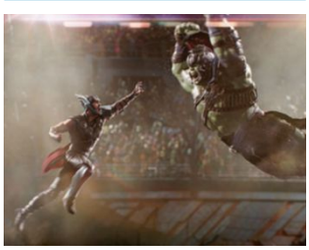
05 THE FLORIDA PROJECT

06 WONDER WOMAN

07 CALL ME BY YOUR NAME

08 LOGAN

09 TONI ERDMANN NEW



10 THOR: RAGNAROK NEW
After gloomier superhero offerings, *Ragnarok*'s joyous silliness arrived late to lift our spirits. Best big green penis gags around.



Zsombor Jéger as the superpowered refugee.

EXCLUSIVE

FLYING HIGH

JUPITER'S MOON | The White God director returns with a startling sci-fi parable about an immigrant with superpowers...

In his last film, 2014's *White God*, Hungarian director Kornél Mundruczó conjured a canine uprising with the startling image of 250 mangy mutts charging through the streets of Budapest. Where do you go from there? Well, how about the sight of a superpowered Syrian refugee (played by Zsombor Jéger) soaring high above all of those man-made borders?

"In 2014, I spent five weeks at a refugee camp in Antwerp, and that experience really moved me," says Mundruczó. "It made me ask what humanism means for me, what existence means for me, what morals mean for me, what Europe means for me." In *Jupiter's Moon*, written before *White God*, Mundruczó shuffles these big questions (plus asides on religious faith, terrorism and urban alienation) into a spectacular sci-fi thriller containing stylised shootouts, kinetic chases and floaty sequences that play like a Terrence Malick take on *Superman*.

"All of the wire work was handled by humans, not by computer," says Mundruczó of Jéger's poetic pirouettes. "The DP was also up in the air. Sometimes there'd be seven or eight people flying in the same moment!"

A rampantly ambitious and technically audacious genre-bender, *Jupiter's Moon* is the kind of film that makes Hollywood snap to attention. It's no surprise, then, that Mundruczó will next be directing Gal Gadot and Bradley Cooper in the Max Landis-scripted *Deeper*, a psychologically tense deep-sea dive thriller.

"It's also a crazy mixed-genre movie," laughs Mundruczó. "It's a submersible adventure targeting the deepest point on the Earth, but this adventure becomes more like a psychedelic trip towards an existential question."

Fair to say that Mundruczó doesn't do easy-to-categorise films. "I have no real interest in creating a pure genre movie, because I feel like it's empty," he agrees. "Meaning is in complexity. Hopefully my films have their own identity." ***JG***

ETA | 5 JANUARY / JUPITER'S MOON OPENS NEXT YEAR.

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REX

BETWEEN TAKES

JACK BLACK

The Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle star talks life on set...

What's generally the first thing you do when you get to set on a new film you're shooting?
Oftentimes, I'll have a first and second breakfast. Then hair, make-up, costume. Then I'll study the lines, but not too much. I like to do my memorisation two or three nights before. That way, you memorise it, go to sleep, it cooks into your subconscious mind.

Do you have any on-set superstitions?
I'm not a superstitious person, but it bothers me when there's a scene that's played really well in rehearsal and then there's a certain expectation. People are like, "Here it comes, the funniest moment in the film!" It's like, "Will you please shut up? You're jinxing it."

Do you have a hot or a cold lunch?
Hot! [*pause, then in a disdainful tone*] Cold? I can't imagine... what would be a delicious cold lunch? The *salad* bar? No!

Do you sleep on set?
I will grab a snooze if I need to. But you do have to be careful. I did a movie one time where if you took a nap the director would take a picture of you and sometimes make embarrassing-looking tableaus in the background of your snooze. That was Tony Scott.

What's the most embarrassing moment you've ever had on a set?
I was on *Nacho Libre* in Mexico and I got a little bit of 'Montezuma's revenge'. I had a little attack in the middle of a scene. I said, "Where's the nearest restroom?" They said, "OK. If you just jump in a van, we'll take you back to set, and that's where the honey wagons are with the restrooms." I just ran because I knew I wasn't getting into a van. I just ran into a field nearby. But everyone from the crew could see me. There was no hiding. So basically I had to relieve myself in front of a crew of 72 people, with my trusty assistant handing me paper. It was very horrifying.

What's the best set experience you've ever had?
The best sex experience?

Not sex. Set experience.
Oh, OK! I just did a few days on a Gus Van Sant movie [Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot]. It was just me and Joaquin Phoenix playing drunk, bar-hopping and capturing it all on film. In general, it's those little indies that are the most gratifying because there's no time to stress. I had fun on *Jumanji*, but it's those little ones that you remember the most, because when you work fast it's just a little more electrifying.

Dwayne Johnson famously called out some colleagues for being "candy asses" on another set. Were you a candy ass on *Jumanji*?
I don't know if he was serious in the first instance. I think he also called us candy asses, but it wasn't nearly as publicised. It was like: what, are we chopped liver? Chopped candy ass? But there was no candy on any of our asses. Our asses were all extremely salty. With sweat. A little sweat and tears. *JC*

'I HAD TO RELIEVE MYSELF IN FRONT OF 72 PEOPLE, WITH MY TRUSTY ASSISTANT HANDING ME PAPER'

ETA | 20 DECEMBER / JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE OPENS THIS CHRISTMAS.

IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A FILM JOURNALIST

Acting features ed **JAMIE GRAHAM** lifts the lid on film journalism.

THIS MONTH CHATTING FILMS IN PUBLIC



"Dunkirk? Nah mate, you wanna check out *Warcraft*."

The barista at my local Caffè Nero is a film fan. Many mornings I almost miss my train because he skilfully holds my latte just out of reach as he raves or rants about some new title he's seen, and he never fails to update me on the flex and flux of his Top 5, which last year finished thus: 1) *Warcraft* 2) *London Has Fallen* 3) *Independence Day: Resurgence* 4) *Suicide Squad* 5) *Ben-Hur*.

Oddly, given just how much our tastes differ, he always asks for my opinion on upcoming movies, and then tosses them back in my face a month or so later: "You said the new *Spider-Man* was good; it's bad," was a typical exchange, while he was quick to criticise *Zootopia* for its narrative deficiencies ("I like a *good* story"), only to laud *Batman v Superman: Dawn Of Justice* in the very same breath.

Still, I was confident that we'd at least agree on *Dunkirk* given the gamut of reactions, from press and punters alike, ranged from ace to masterpiece. "Very boring," came the Monday morning verdict as he clutched my latte to his chest – a withering appraisal that he then undercut somewhat by asking me which war the movie was set in.

SHARED PASSION

At the risk of sounding like a pompous prick, there are times when I really can't be arsed to have these chats. I'm tired, I'm late, I just want my coffee. Likewise, it gets repetitive being asked the same questions at every party – "What's your favourite movie?" "Who's the best person you've ever interviewed?" "Who's the worst?" – and having every cabbie tell me about the film, whatsitcalled, starring thingamajig, he saw the other day.

Most of the time, however, it delights me. As small talk goes, chatting movies beats hell out of the weather, and the day that cinema is no longer my passion is the day I hand in my badge as a film journo.

The great thing about movies is that everyone, to some degree or another, watches them (well, apart from the guy I met a couple of years ago who stated he'd never, in 35 years, seen a film – a claim that made my brain boggle), and most people are keen to proffer their thoughts. OK, so I might struggle to comprehend how anyone could consider *Warcraft* a triumph while hating on *La La Land* and *Moonlight*, but others will no doubt wince that my own favourites of 2017 are *Toni Erdmann*, *The Lost City Of Z* and *The Florida Project*. Tomato, to-mate-o. Opinions, arseholes.

TALKING CRAP

And yet… some opinions are just plain wrong. I long ago gave up debating movies with my father-in-law, and now just nod along mutely when he again tells me that *Down Periscope* is the greatest film ever made. I even revisited the damn thing with him in an effort to understand its "genius", but barely caught a line of dialogue as he pre-emptively howled and hooted from start to finish.

It was no surprise, then, when I received a text saying, "Watched *Dunkirk*. I am genuinely appalled. Uniforms (both sides) totally wrong. Para weren't formed until much later. Bazooka or Panzerfaust not invented. Script terrible." I ignored it, but continued to receive goading messages for the next couple of months until I was finally in a room with him and he could vent at me freely. And then it happened: suddenly it became clear that the *Dunkirk* he'd seen was not Christopher Nolan's intimate epic but Nick Lyon's *Operation Dunkirk*, which is everything you'd expect from the director of *Earthtastrophe* and *Stormageddon*.

Ah, sweet, sweet schadenfreude. For a week. Until he watched the correct *Dunkirk* and sent a five-word text: "Atrocious. Love to you both." He'd be better off with my barista as a son-in-law…



'THE DAY THAT CINEMA IS NO LONGER MY PASSION IS THE DAY I HAND IN MY BADGE'

Jamie will return next issue... For more misadventures, follow: @jamie_graham9 on Twitter.

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JOONAS SUOTAMO ZACH GALLIGAN IAN MCDIARMID JENNIFER RUNYON KEN COLLEY

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FURTHER EDUCATION

INSIDIOUS: THE LAST KEY | The horror saga unlocks a revealing origin story...

It's the last day of summer in the southern California desert. In the town of Pomona, about 25 miles east of LA (doubling for New Mexico), parapsychologist Elise Rainier (Lin Shaye) walks out of a hospital; her arms around gentle giant Tucker (Angus Sampson) and brainiac Specs (Leigh Whannell) – her Spectral Sightings partners. *Teasers* is on set to witness a third act shot from *Insidious: The Last Key*. And if the look on Elise's face is any indication, the team's latest case is a whopper.

The fourth film in the hit horror series, *The Last Key* breaks with tradition by making Shaye's character – the *Insidious* equivalent of *Poltergeist*'s Tangina – its central focus, as she confronts the tragedy that set her on her path. During a break in shooting, director Adam Robitel (who wrote *Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension*) explains, "It's sort of an origin story. Elise is the superhero of the franchise. And it deals with her upbringing and some of the not-so-pleasant things that happened in her childhood."

Robitel – who has taken over from *Insidious: Chapter 3* helmer Whannell – is four weeks into shooting, with just one week remaining. Whannell, who has scripted all four instalments of the franchise, was keen for the latest chapter to turn the series' formula on its ear. "The case of this movie," says the writer, garbed in Specs' white shirt and black tie, "is that it's a haunted house. But the haunted house is [*Elise's*] house, the one she grew up in. She's basically dealing with a literal demon and a metaphorical demon, all the demons of her past sort of come back."

Whannell admits that it isn't easy coming up with a new demon for each chapter of the supernatural saga. "But that seems to be a hallmark of the *Insidious* films," he concedes. "These distinctive demons. We've had the Bride in Black and the Red-Face demon and then in the last film [*2015's* Insidious: Chapter 3] we had 'The Man Who Can't Breathe' with his breathing apparatus. Having to one up oneself with each film, I was like, 'Alright, what's unique?' I think we really came up with something great. He doesn't really have a name, so we've nicknamed him KeyFace. He's kind of a gatekeeper. He has keys for fingers and he can unlock doors between this world and The Further."

Shaye, who now headlines the series at the age of 73, says she was left speechless by the route that her career has taken. "I'm probably gonna cry during this interview," she warns us. "This has been a very loaded experience for me. It's the biggest role I've ever had in my career. This film goes beyond entertainment. It's an eye-opener about how you have to grow, no matter what happens to you as a child." ***JMc***

LOCK-IN
You'll never forget your keys again... (below) Elise and Aubrey (Lin Shaye and Tessa Ferrer) investigate further.



ETA | 12 JANUARY / INSIDIOUS: THE LAST KEY OPENS NEXT YEAR.

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LAKE PLACID
Kier plays the menacing 'Placid Man' in *Brawl In Cell Block 99*.

THE HERO

UDO KIER

The vampiric actor reflects on a bloody career...

A cult character actor best known for sinister supporting roles in *Suspiria*, *Blade* and *Shadow Of The Vampire*, Udo Kier is an auteur filmmaker's favourite. After breaking out with grisly Andy Warhol double bill *Flesh For Frankenstein* and *Blood For Dracula*, Kier frequently collaborated with Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and remains a regular player for Gus Van Sant and Lars von Trier. Watch him scene steal next in Alexander Payne's *Downsizing*, and *Brawl In Cell Block 99*.

Was it hard to say the words S. Craig Zahler wrote for your *Brawl In Cell Block 99* character?
I read my character, and said, "This cannot be possible. I haven't seen someone that evil in a movie." This is really going under the skin. I saw the film yesterday. It was very violent, but it is a different kind of violence. It's a violence where a head rolls with a "Yeah!" The audience will go crazy.

What drew you to joining the cast of Alexander Payne's *Downsizing*?
I like to work with directors who write their own story. A big thing of it had to do with playing with Christoph Waltz. And I like to do studio films with the character of a low-budget film, because everybody is normal. It's not like everybody comes with their own publicist and have 100,000 demands – it wasn't that film.

You're the master of making a big impression with small roles...
I always say if you play the friend of the leading man, you will never be the leading man. But sometimes you'll have a smaller role, and if it's strong enough, people talk about it. I mean, if Lars von Trier calls me for *The Kingdom*, where I play a baby and be born on screen, what can be better than that? My God! Coming out screaming with a bloody face!

What keeps you coming back to working with von Trier?
Lars is the only director [*that*] if he were to tell me I would just walk from left to right, I know nobody will forget that. When we did *Melancholia* he said, "Udo, I want you to go into the room, but you don't want to see Kirsten [*Dunst*]. What would you do?" I said, "I would put my left hand up to my face." That movement was written about in *Variety*.

How did your breakout with Warhol come about?
I was in an aeroplane in 1972, and there was a man with a beard. And he says, "What do you do?" I said, "I'm an actor." He said, "Give me your number. My name is Paul Morrissey. I work with Andy Warhol." And so a couple of weeks later, I got a call. "I'm doing a little film in 3D for Carlo Ponti. And I have a role for you." I said, "Oh, great. What do I play?" He said, "Frankenstein." I'm a lucky man.

What are your memories of *Suspiria*?
Next week is the reunion of *Suspiria*. Forty years. Jessica Harper, I haven't seen her for a long time, she will be here with Dario [*Argento*]. The good thing is that people still think about the movie. I met Dario in Berlin, when I was working with [*Rainer Werner*] Fassbinder. He said, "I only have a small role for you." Later I realised that I'm explaining the whole film to her!

Van Sant is a frequent collaborator, and you're in his next film...
Yes, with Joaquin Phoenix. It has a very complicated title: *Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot*. I had dinner with him and said, "You know, Gus, everything I have, I owe to you." I didn't get paid very much [*on* My Own Private Idaho] – nobody did. But I have a career in America because of him. *JF*



LENDING SUPPORT (top to bottom) Comforting Jessica Harper as Frank Mandel in *Suspiria*; as vampire leader Gitano Dragonetti in *Blade*; threatening Vince Vaughn's unborn child in *Brawl In Cell Block 99*.

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BIG SCREEN

THE WORLD'S MOST TRUSTED MOVIE REVIEWS



40

PADDINGTON 2

Fantastic beast...

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'A FEELGOOD SEQUEL ONLY MARMALADE HATERS COULD RESIST'

NEW RELEASES

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Jigsaw	★★★	p43
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Mountains May Depart	★★★	p51
The Prince Of Nothingwood	★★★	p49
The Unseen	★★	p48

ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to gamesradar.com/totalfilm for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Ferdinand	16 December
Justice League	17 November
The Star	24 November
Star Wars: The Last Jedi	14 December

For more reviews visit gamesradar.com/totalfilm

CERTIFICATE PG **DIRECTOR** Paul King **STARRING** Ben Whishaw, Hugh Bonneville, Hugh Grant, Sally Hawkins, Brendan Gleeson, Julie Walters, Peter Capaldi **SCREENPLAY** Paul King, Simon Farnaby **DISTRIBUTOR** Studiocanal **RUNNING TIME** 103 mins

PADDINGTON 2

Bears repeating...

★★★★☆ OUT NOW

If you're kind and polite, the world will be right!" declares Paddington Bear in *Paddington 2*, the inevitable, and welcome, sequel to 2014's box-office hit. The advice derives from our hero's beloved Aunt Lucy, 99 years old yet still going strong back in deepest, darkest Peru. Yet her words of wisdom could almost stand as a mission statement for the film itself, which firmly sets out to be an even kinder and politer affair than its predecessor: a film that, for all its sweetness, still managed to spawn a "creepy Paddington" meme, while the BBFC forewarned consumers of its "dangerous behaviour, mild threat and innuendo".

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

AN AWFULLY BIG ADVENTURE *1995*
Grant's arrogant director looks like Phoenix Buchanan in miniature.

THOMAS AND THE MAGIC RAILROAD *2000*
More steam trains in hot pursuit, this time with Peter Fonda on board.

DESPICABLE ME 3 *2017*
The Minions quit Gru and go to jail in their fourth big-screen outing.

FOR MORE REVIEWS VISIT GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM

That pic, you'll recall, featured Nicole Kidman as a mad taxidermist out to have Paddington stuffed and mounted at the Natural History Museum. Its sequel, in contrast, opts for a more buffoonish bad guy – a washed-up actor, now reduced to dog food commercials, with costly plans to put on a career-salvaging one-man show. To do so, the pompous Phoenix Buchanan – played to the hilt by Hugh Grant, fresh from having his own career re-energised by *Florence Foster Jenkins* – needs a hidden fortune that can only be located with the help of a dusty old pop-up book from Mr. Gruber's antiques shop. As chance would have it, this is the same tome Paddington wants to get his aunt for her 100th birthday, a coincidence that soon sets thespian and bear on a comic collision course.

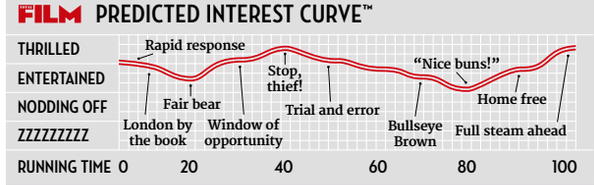
Before that, however, we get to see Paddington join the workforce, first by getting a job at a gentlemen's barbers (it doesn't go well), and then by finding gainful employment as a furry window cleaner. Those who embraced the first movie for its pro-immigration stance may be tempted to read these slapstick scenes as an endorsement of migrant labour, not least when Paddington cleans The Shard with a calypso band for accompaniment. On the whole, though, director Paul King and co-writer Simon Farnaby keep the Brexit politics understated, presenting metropolitan multiculturalism as a life-enriching boon and confining their opprobrium to Peter Capaldi's rabid Little Englander: a character who, needless to say, could not be happier when his ursine nemesis is arrested, framed and sent away to the big house for "grand theft and grievous barberly harm".

The late Michael Bond never wrote a book called *Paddington Goes To Jail*. But had he done so, it might well have featured a prison chef every bit as fearsome as Brendan Gleeson's Knuckles McGinty, a character so ill-tempered only the taste of freshly made marmalade can calm him. In a film as episodic as it is enjoyable, it's fair to say this *Porridge*-style interlude goes on rather too long. Yet it does give rise to a rollicking jail break that ensures Paddington is on board for the elaborate steam-train finale, one that finds an unusual use for toffee apples while permitting Sally Hawkins's otherwise under-utilised Mrs. Brown to play a vitally heroic role.

Other moments of note include a towpath pursuit featuring a wolfhound and a goose, a lovely animated sequence involving familiar London landmarks and a flashback showing how Padds – voiced as decorously as ever by *Skyfall*'s Ben Whishaw – came to have an aunt in the first place. It all adds up to an engaging, rib-tickling and warm-hearted charmer that's won us over long before Grant, hilariously game throughout, turns up at St. Paul's disguised as a nun. ***Neil Smith***


"Can we take your order please?"

FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



THE VERDICT

State-of-the-art effects combine with playful, generous storytelling to create a feelgood sequel and heartfelt family film that only marmalade haters could resist.





The tennis match was to be the decider, after the arm wrestle and eyewear contest left the rivals all square...

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN *1992*
Madonna and co round the bases in the WW2 mould-breaking women's league.

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM *2002*
Gurinder Chadha's culture-clash footy-com is back-of-the-net stuff.

FOXCATCHER *2014*
Steve Carell's murderous millionaire is the MVP in this disturbing true-crime sports drama.

FOR MORE REVIEWS VISIT GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM

BATTLE OF THE SEXES

Game, set, slanging match...

★★★★☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

In September 1973, 90 million TV viewers watched an extraordinary mixed-sex tennis match, as 55-year-old former US champ Bobby Riggs took on the young Billie Jean King, the US No. 1 woman player. Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris' slickly enjoyable, big-hearted dramedy makes their journey there as compelling as the match itself.

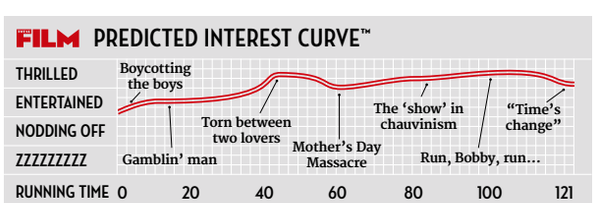
"Male chauvinist pig versus hairy-legged feminist" was Riggs' rallying cry to the media. But the directors of *Little Miss Sunshine* dig deeper, discovering two outsiders battling easy stereotypes. Billie Jean (Emma Stone), starting her own all-women Virginia Slims tour to escape the US Tennis Association, which pays men eight times more than women, is all about the work. Has-been hustler Riggs (a pitch-perfect Steve Carell) is a cash-hungry playboy. Determined to turn Billie Jean's pitch for equality into his own big-money payday, Riggs' assertion that she can't beat him sets all of America buzzing.

Not your average sports movie, this unconventional biopic revels in the cultural battle as much as the tennis showdown. Simon Beaufoy's wry script balances the on-court tensions and the off-court drama, giving them a warmly comic treatment. Lending poignancy to Riggs' desperate stunts, it lets Carell flaunt his needy side, as well as some brazen bad-boy stunts. Berating his Gambler's Anonymous meeting, he says, "You folks are here because you're *terrible* at gambling."

Wisecracking through matches and money-grabbing photoshoots, Carell is terrific. Where he's a dead ringer for Riggs, Stone opts for emotional truth rather than impersonation. With touching intensity, she captures Billie Jean's odd combination of tough sporting tenacity and girlish anxiety. Falling into her first lesbian affair with Andrea Riseborough's hairdresser, she's exquisitely vulnerable. Dayton and Faris draw their relationship with close-up delicacy, their first haircut together as intimate as a full-on love scene. And there's real jeopardy, too – in the homophobic '70s, King's fling endangered the entire women's tour, as well as her career and marriage.

Sharp-eyed about the era's sexism, the film is nonetheless awash in '70s kitsch without going the full *Anchorman*. It pulls off convincing tennis matches, too, using old-school TV high-up shots and tense close-ups.

Careful to slice rather than smash its feminist and LGBTQ politics at us, the film resonates with today's battles over pay equality and closeted sports stars. But it's a pacey, entertaining watch. Like the wily Riggs, it knows what the crowd wants. ***Kate Stables***



CERTIFICATE 12A **DIRECTOR** Jonathan Dayton, Valerie Faris **STARRING** Emma Stone, Steve Carell, Andrea Riseborough **SCREENPLAY** Simon Beaufoy **DISTRIBUTOR** 20th Century Fox **RUNNING TIME** 121 mins

THE VERDICT

Stone and Carell ace it in this smart biopic, stylishly recreating the champ-vs-clown clash of the tennis titans that electrified '70s America.

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Ain't no party like a Tommy Wiseau party...

CERTIFICATE 15 **DIRECTOR** James Franco **STARRING** James Franco, Dave Franco, Alison Brie **SCREENPLAY** Michael H. Weber, Scott Neustadter **DISTRIBUTOR** Warner Bros **RUNNING TIME** 104 mins

THE DISASTER ARTIST

The elephant in The Room...

★★★★☆ OUT 1 DECEMBER

Written, directed, produced by and starring Tommy Wiseau, *The Room* (2003) is a candidate for the best-worst film ever made. Based on Wiseau's co-star/best friend Greg Sestero's making-of book, *The Disaster Artist* examines Wiseau's (highly questionable) methods through a witty postmodern filter.

We meet the engaging Sestero (Dave Franco) at drama class massacring *Waiting For Godot*. "You have to expose yourself or no one's ever gonna care," says the teacher. Next onstage is Wiseau (James Franco, who directs), who does exactly that. Together, this odd couple relocate to LA to make it big, singularly fail, and decide to create their own movie.

At this point it's reasonable to worry if we are, effectively, laughing at a handsome actor pretending to be ugly/mentally unwell. Yet Franco goes all-out to convince us this man who "wants his own planet" does actually hail from ours. When it comes to the shoot itself, the film slips into high gear, with knowing cameos, plus Seth Rogen as script editor.

Screenwriters Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber even manage to sweeten this potential comedy of cruelty with an uplifting outro. The biggest compliment you can pay *The Disaster Artist* is that it makes you want to rewatch *The Room*, which can't have been anyone's plan. ***Matt Glasby***

THE VERDICT

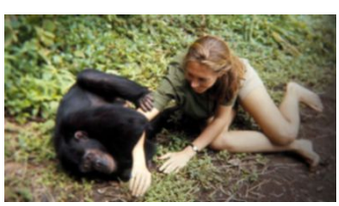
A terrific film about a terrifically terrible one, *The Disaster Artist* is good-bad movie gold. Double bill alert!



JIGSAW

★★★☆☆ OUT NOW

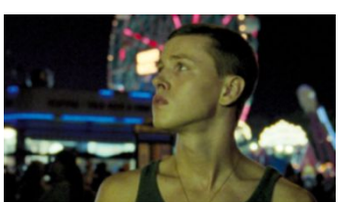
"The game is simple – the best ones are," says Tobin Bell's John Kramer, aka Jigsaw back from the dead (again) in the Spierig brothers' neat *Saw* revival. Like its predecessors, the conceit – five morally questionable captives facing grisly torture contraptions – keeps things uncomplicated, even if there's a narrative rug-pull late on. Still as hokey as ever, mind, but gore-seekers should enjoy. ***James Mottram***



JANE

★★★★☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

The life and work of British primatologist Jane Goodall would make a fascinating subject for a documentary even without the reams of previously unseen footage of her interacting with chimps in Tanzania that director Brett Morgen (*The Kid Stays In The Picture*) had at his disposal. With it comes admission into a stunning world of majesty and savagery; shame about the overbearing Philip Glass score. ***Neil Smith***



BEACH RATS

★★★★☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

Unemployed 19-year-old Frankie (Harris Dickinson) spends his summer days in Brooklyn hanging out with his buddies. But at night he logs on to gay hook-up sites to meet older men. Written and directed by Eliza Hittman, this dreamily shot US indie is an insightful study of sexual repression and awakening, featuring a compelling lead performance from Brit newcomer Dickinson. ***Tom Dawson***



DADDY'S HOME 2

★★☆☆☆ OUT 22 NOVEMBER

The smidge of goodwill earned by the first *DH* turns to coal in this festive sequel, which goes the *Meet The Parents* route of wheeling out more big-name elders (Mel Gibson, John Lithgow)… then *Fockers* things up with overplayed set-pieces and a rehash of Will Ferrell/Mark Wahlberg's co-dad rivalry. Vexingly, Ferrell flaunts his daft genius just enough to avert an entirely shite Christmas. ***Matthew Leyland***

As suspected,
it definitely tickles.





CERTIFICATE 12A **DIRECTOR** Kenneth Branagh **STARRING** Kenneth Branagh, Johnny Depp, Judi Dench, Daisy Ridley, Willem Dafoe **SCREENPLAY** Michael Green **DISTRIBUTOR** Fox **RUNNING TIME** 114 mins

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Train plotting...

★★★★☆ OUT NOW

In 1934, Agatha Christie stoked up a standard locked-room mystery by setting it on the titular steam locomotive as it hurtles from Istanbul to Calais. Four decades on, Kenneth Branagh finds interesting ways to grease the wheels of this new take on the oft-filmed novel.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

THE LADY VANISHES *1938*
It's between this train-set mystery and *The 39 Steps* for Hitchcock's best British movie.

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS *1974*
Strong performances in Sidney Lumet's esteemed take; Ingrid Bergman won a Supporting Actress Oscar.

GOSFORD PARK *2001*
Robert Altman puts his own inimitable stamp on a tale of class, etiquette and murder.

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The plot, though, essentially remains the same. Legendary Belgian detective Hercule Poirot (Branagh) accompanies his stupendous moustache aboard the famous train to join a throng of colourful characters: Princess Dragomiroff (Judi Dench); businessman Samuel Edward Ratchett (Johnny Depp) and his assistant Hector MacQueen (Josh Gad); widow Mrs. Hubbard (Michelle Pfeiffer); Professor Gerhard Hardman (Willem Dafoe); missionary Pilar Estravados (Penélope Cruz); Dr. Arbuthnot (Leslie Odom Jr.); butler Edward Masterman (Derek Jacobi); maid Hildegarde Schmidt (Olivia Colman); car salesman Marquez (Manuel Garcia-Rulfo); Count and Countess Andrenyi (Sergei Polunin, Lucy Boynton); and governess Mary Debenham (Daisy Ridley).

No sooner has Poirot settled into his bunk than there are bumps in the night. The next morning, one of the passengers is discovered dead in a locked cabin, and the Belgian bloodhound starts sniffing for clues. "If there was a murder, there was a murderer," he cunningly surmises. "The murderer is with us and every one of you is a suspect."

With nowhere to go – the train totters upon a towering trestle, derailed by a mini-avalanche – the scene is set for a handsomely old-fashioned whodunit full of larger-than-life characterisation, deep-buried secrets and devilish deduction. One by one Poirot interrogates his fellow travellers, sifting through their obfuscatory answers and a fistful of hard clues to piece together a startling revelation.

Shooting in 65mm, Branagh delivers all of the eye-saucering exteriors you'd expect, as mountaintops soar, sunlight glints at the end of tunnels and stations snuggle under a duvet of blue snow. More pleasing still is how well the format adapts to the cramped confines of the locomotive – elegant tracking shots navigate the space smoothly, the discovery of the murder scene is shot from above à la Hitchcock or De Palma, and close-ups perform keyhole surgery through every pore to scrutinise souls.

The script, by *Blade Runner 2049*'s Michael Green, throws in a few mischievous surprises and works hard to make Christie's novel relevant to our troubled times as our protagonists' dalliance with death brings out tensions and prejudices. Branagh's take on Poirot allows room for fear, uncertainty and lost love, and duality is frequently suggested via reflections in glass and chrome – a technique overused in movies, no doubt, but one befitting such a classic narrative.

For all the fun, adventure and IMAX-sized images on display, there's a whiff of Sunday-afternoon telly about Branagh's reboot. Still, it can't hurt that the on-form cast rivals the star power of Sidney Lumet's 1974 ensemble, and a playful coda sets up a sequel. Might Poirot be pitching his wits against Avengers, Jedi and the *Fast And The Furious* family for years to come? ***Jamie Graham***

FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



THE VERDICT

A glittery ensemble cast relishes the snow-saturated journey of starring in Sir Ken's polished, frisky version of Christie's seminal whodunit. All aboard...



Jake Gyllenhaal's Jeff Bauman being rushed to hospital from the Boston Marathon bombing.

CERTIFICATE 15 **DIRECTOR** David Gordon Green **STARRING** Jake Gyllenhaal, Tatiana Maslany, Miranda Richardson **SCREENPLAY** John Pollono **DISTRIBUTOR** Lionsgate **RUNNING TIME** 119 mins

STRONGER

Road to recovery...

★★★★☆ OUT 8 DECEMBER

So, am I hero for standing there getting my legs blown off?" asks Jeff Bauman (Jake Gyllenhaal). Punchy and grittily realistic, the unvarnished true-life story of Bauman, horribly injured in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, isn't your average inspirational melodrama. If *Patriots Day* hymned the city's strength around the atrocity, here David Gordon Green's survival tale looks at life after the headlines fade.

Tracing Jeff's journey from blue-collar slacker to uncertain hero, the tender love story at the film's core shows him wrestling with responsibility as much as recovery. On-off girlfriend Erin (Tatiana Maslany, quietly excellent) fights his corner, but also battles his publicity-loving mother, Miranda Richardson's boozy Patty. No dip, depression, or drinking bout of Jeff's goes unexamined in this tense, intimate film.

Like *The Big Sick*, it's smart about the strains of being both lover and care-giver. Yet it's also full of energy and humour, riding shotgun as wheelchair-bound Jeff brawls with redneck conspiracy nuts, or sets off an LSD-fuelled police chase. An intense but understated Gyllenhaal is superb throughout, adroitly conveying Jeff's ambivalence at being hailed as 'Boston Strong', while splintered by PTSD and horrific flashbacks. It's a portrayal as tough and complex as the man it honours. ***Kate Stables***

THE VERDICT

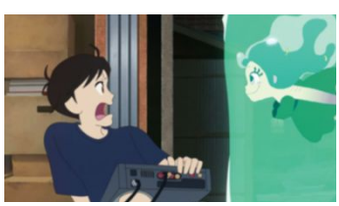
Gyllenhaal is outstanding in this inspiring warts-and-all story of a Boston bombing survivor's recovery battle.



HI-LO JOE

★★☆☆☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

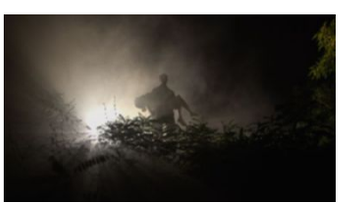
Joe (Matthew Stathers) and Elly (Lizzie Philips) are in love, but their relationship is complicated by Joe's moods. James Kermack's feature debut is a well-intentioned study of depression, undone by pitching itself as both serious drama and whimsical comedy. The former element is laborious, the latter insufferably laddish. Joe on a high is so crass and irritating that his lows come as something of a relief. ***Simon Kinnear***



LU OVER THE WALL

★★★☆☆ OUT 6 DECEMBER

A lonely mid-school muso's heart is lifted by friendship with a mer-girl in Masaaki Yuasa's buoyant and bubbly animation. Though *Ponyo*'s influence laps at his heels, Yuasa's film offers its own flourishes of vibrant fancy. The end-stretch is overlong, but the Flash animation style pops with colour, the music is fun, and off-the-scale creature cuteness abounds. Here be mer-doggies! ***Kevin Harley***



STRANGLED

★★★☆☆ OUT NOW

Árpád Sopsits' crime procedural dramatises real-life attempts to catch a serial killer in '60s Hungary. The action moves briskly, unmasking the murderer early and weaving together the police investigations, the crimes and a wrongful conviction. Although beautifully shot, this is surface-level only: besides the under-developed characters, the scenes of sexual violence are gratuitously repetitive. ***Tim Coleman***



BETTER WATCH OUT

★★★★☆ OUT 8 DECEMBER

Babysitter slasher? Home invasion? Torture porn? *Better Watch Out* is all of these and much more, as 12-year-old Luke (*Pan*'s Levi Miller) and his teen sitter (Olivia DeJonge) face a seemingly standard attack before the action takes a turn into shockingly dark territory. Directed by Chris Peckover, this is also a Christmas horror-comedy – and one of the best since *Gremlins*. ***Jamie Graham***

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BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

★★★★★ OUT 8 DECEMBER

For his 100th film, Japanese cult auteur Takashi Miike celebrates with something special. Based on Hiroaki Samura's manga series, this tale of Manji (Takuya Kimura), a samurai cursed with eternal life, is dazzlingly assembled. Stunning fights and creepy CG come wrapped inside a blade-sharp story, as the swordsman vows to hunt the killers of a young girl's parents. Truly epic. ***James Mottram***



THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL

★★★★★ OUT 6 DECEMBER

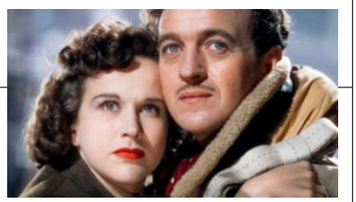
Just 25 years old but already a classic, this is the Muppets' finest film. Its mashup of slapstick, songs and literary adaptation is suitably anarchic, but crucially it gets Dickens right. As Scrooge, Michael Caine rises to the challenge and helps find the pathos beneath the puppetry. Made after Jim Henson's passing, son Brian's tribute puts the felt in 'heartfelt'. ***Simon Kinnear***



MOST BEAUTIFUL ISLAND

★★★☆☆ OUT 1 DECEMBER

Ana Asensio's ironically titled writer-director debut chronicles a nightmarish day in the life of the distressed Luciana (Asensio), an undocumented immigrant in New York. Desperate for cash, she agrees to attend a mysterious party, peopled by wealthy gamblers. Shot on Super 16mm film, this is a taut, timely drama, even if the pay-off doesn't quite match the build-up. ***Tom Dawson***



A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

★★★★★ OUT 8 DECEMBER

Voted the second-greatest British film of all time by this very publication, Powell and Pressburger's fantasy dazzles and delights. David Niven's the WW2 pilot who survives an air crash due to a celestial oversight. Now Heaven wants him back. Big ask, especially as he's fallen in love… Originally conceived to improve Anglo-American relations, it's an enduring classic. ***Ali Catterall***

CERTIFICATE 15 **DIRECTOR** George Clooney **STARRING** Matt Damon **SCREENPLAY** Joel Coen, Ethan Coen, George Clooney, Grant Heslov **DISTRIBUTOR** eOne **RUNNING TIME** 104 mins

SUBURBICON

Neighbourhood botch...

★★☆☆☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

Written by the Coen brothers in 1986, shortly after the release of their debut feature *Blood Simple*, the *Suburbicon* script languished in a drawer for 30 years before being salvaged by occasional collaborator George Clooney. Unfortunately, this cack-handed con-job-meets-social-satire plays like a Coen knock-off.

When a home invasion gone wrong leads to the death of his wife, family man Gardner Lodge's (Matt Damon) seemingly idyllic life is thrown into disarray. But when Rose's identical sister Margaret (Julianne Moore, pulling double duties) cosies up to Gardner, it quickly becomes clear something's rotten in the state of Suburbicon…

It would be unfair to label Clooney's crack at the Coens a complete failure. He nails the setting, the '50s 'burbs proving the perfect backdrop for a familiar tale of best-laid plans. And the cast do sterling work – particularly Damon, surprisingly effective as a William H. Macy-esque weak man.

But Clooney doesn't convey the mastery of tone that a Coen script requires, lurching between black comedy and serious murder mystery with all the grace of a wonky-wheeled supermarket trolley. Worse, a subplot about a black family moving into Suburbicon is reduced to background noise. At best its inclusion feels half-hearted, at worst woefully cynical. ***Jordan Farley***

THE VERDICT

The cast do decent work, but Clooney's ersatz *Fargo* misses the mark. A Coen pastiche rather than the real deal.



Agreeing to kill somebody was one thing, but admitting to liking the new avocado kitchen...



He'd asked for a pint of Fosters, but been overruled.

CERTIFICATE 15 **DIRECTOR** Paul McGuigan **STARRING** Annette Bening, Jamie Bell, Julie Walters, Vanessa Redgrave **SCREENPLAY** Matt Greenhalgh **DISTRIBUTOR** Lionsgate **RUNNING TIME** 105 mins

FILM STARS DON'T DIE IN LIVERPOOL

Paths of Gloria...

★★★★☆ OUT 17 NOVEMBER

In the late '70s, in a lodging house in Primrose Hill, young aspiring actor Peter Turner discovered a fellow lodger was Hollywood actress Gloria Grahame – once an Oscar-winner, acclaimed for *In A Lonely Place* (see right) and *The Big Heat* (see p51), now well past her glory years. Despite the 30-plus age difference, they fell in love and went to the States together, but the affair broke up. Two years later, back in Liverpool, he got a call: Grahame, in a theatre production in Lancaster, had fallen ill. He brought her back to his family's small terraced house, where it soon emerged how serious things were…

Paul McGuigan's film sticks closely to Turner's 1986 memoir but, switching timelines back and forth, lends it a deliberate theatricality – set transitions, back projection – that slots perfectly into this hearteningly old-fashioned romance.

He's lined up a crack cast – Julie Walters, Kenneth Cranham, Vanessa Redgrave, Stephen Graham – but it's Jamie Bell as Peter and (above all) Annette Bening as Gloria who triumph in performances of emotional depth. Eon Productions rarely stray away from 007. We can be glad that here, for once, they did. ***Philip Kemp***

THE VERDICT

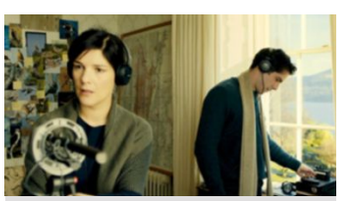
A real-life May-December romance, movingly told and acted. Bening and Bell give performances to cherish.



WONDER

★★★☆☆ OUT 1 DECEMBER

Based on R.J. Palacio's bestselling book, *Wonder* tells of August Pullman (*Room*'s Jacob Tremblay), a child with facial differences who has a rough time integrating into a mainstream school. *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower* director Stephen Chbosky traces a rote story arc but works hard to avoid mawkishness, while Julia Roberts and Owen Wilson dial down their star power to serve the story as Auggie's fretful folks. ***Jamie Graham***



THE UNSEEN

★★☆☆☆ OUT 15 DECEMBER

Following the death of their child, Gemma (Jasmine Hyde) and Will (Richard Flood) try to escape their grief at a lakeside cottage run by new friend Paul (Simon Cotton), while also being haunted by their dead son's voice. Taking *Don't Look Now* as a reference point, Gary Sinyor's film is turgid, flabby and – despite some committed performances and great ideas – toothless, with neither tension nor bite. ***Tim Coleman***



MANIFESTO

★★★☆☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

A staggering tour de force from Cate Blanchett anchors Julian Rosefeldt's intellectual concept-movie. Deploying a wide range of accents and characters, from punk rocker to schoolteacher, Blanchett treats us to pronouncements echoing down the ages. Marx, Tristan Tzara, André Breton, Werner Herzog; Constructivism, Dadaism, Futurism… on it goes. Impressive, sure, but ultimately stultifying. ***Philip Kemp***



A BAD MOMS CHRISTMAS

★★☆☆☆ OUT NOW

Mila Kunis, Kristen Bell and Kathryn Hahn deck the halls for their critic-proof sequel, this time battling their own mamas (Christine Baranski, Cheryl Hines, Susan Sarandon). While the film lacks Christina Applegate's razor-sharp delivery (though she gets a LOL-worthy cameo) and most of the plot doesn't make sense, the older ladies warrant a Bad Grans spin-off. ***Josh Winning***

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IN A LONELY PLACE

★★★★★ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

Decades before Harvey Weinstein, Nicholas Ray exposed Hollywood's abusive nature in a still-startling *film-about-film* noir. After Laurel Gray (Gloria Grahame) provides an alibi for murder suspect – and washed-up screenwriter – Dixon Steele (Humphrey Bogart), they fall in love… only for Laurel to discover Dixon is manipulative in life and art. A volatile Bogart drops the charm to deliver perhaps his finest performance. ***Simon Kinnear***



THE MAN WHO INVENTED CHRISTMAS

★★☆☆☆ OUT 1 DECEMBER

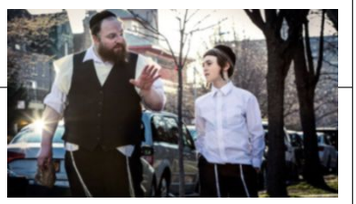
Hmm: that would be Christ, right? Er, no. According to this footling fantasy it was Dickens, it being *A Christmas Carol* that enshrined the traditions we cherish today. Not that he did it alone. The way this film tells it, the author (Dan Stevens) required visitations from Scrooge, Tiny Tim et al to help him meet his deadline. Humbug? You said it, Ebenezer. ***Neil Smith***



THE PRINCE OF NOTHINGWOOD

★★★☆☆ OUT 15 DECEMBER

'Nothingwood' is the nickname for Afghanistan's film industry, seemingly powered by one man: Salim Shaheen, who's produced, directed and starred in more than 100 features. While it fascinates to see this force of nature in full flow, Sonia Kronlund's doc fails to fully explore issues that might contradict his self-made image. The result's more entertaining oddity than revelation. ***Tom Bond***



MENASHE

★★★★☆ OUT 8 DECEMBER

Performed in Yiddish and shot in Brooklyn's Borough Park, this is a rare insight into Orthodox Jewish culture. The low-key tone and casual pacing create an atmosphere akin to a fly-on-the-wall doc, while a nuanced moral conflict builds through the plight of the title character: an affable but flawed widower whose liberal values clash with his community as he struggles to gain custody of his child. ***Stephen Puddicombe***

CERTIFICATE 15 **DIRECTOR** Michael Haneke **STARRING** Isabelle Huppert, Jean-Louis Trintignant **SCREENPLAY** Michael Haneke **DISTRIBUTOR** Curzon Artificial Eye **RUNNING TIME** 107 mins

HAPPY END

Family misfortunes…

★★★★☆ OUT 1 DECEMBER

Michael Haneke is not, fair to say, mellowing with age. Aged 75, the Austrian auteur here picks at familiar scabs, once more exploring bourgeois guilt, intergenerational conflict, surveillance, sociopathic kids, racial conflict and euthanasia.

Set in Calais, *Happy End* trains a steely gaze on the Laurent family. Octogenarian George (Jean-Louis Trintignant) is the patriarch, while the family construction firm is run by middle-aged Anne (Isabelle Huppert) – whose youngest son, Pierre (Franz Rogowski), is responsible for a bad accident on site. The Laurents' privileged existence is further disrupted by a drug overdose, an extra-marital affair and the simmering resentment of the Moroccan servant couple who are daily subjected to their (g)liberal racism.

As is Haneke's wont, the glacial images tease and torture with their withholding of information, demanding viewers scrutinise the edges and deep backgrounds of every frame in search of answers. Anxiety clogs each scene. And violence, when it inevitably erupts, is typically abrupt and all the more chilling for it.

But *Happy End* is also diabolically funny – part grisly farce, part horror movie, all Haneke. Some will dismiss it as a greatest hits compilation; try a summation of a life's work. ***Jamie Graham***

THE VERDICT

The unflinching filmmaker behind *Funny Games*, *Hidden* and *Amour* returns to his decidedly uncuddly pet themes.



Under the desk he was wearing pink hot pants and a frilly petticoat.


Not your traditional love triangle.

CERTIFICATE 15 **DIRECTOR** Angela Robinson **STARRING** Luke Evans, Rebecca Hall, Bella Heathcote, Connie Britton **SCREENPLAY** Angela Robinson **DISTRIBUTOR** Sony **RUNNING TIME** 108 mins

PROFESSOR MARSTON AND THE WONDER WOMEN

Lasso-er, missus...

★★★★☆ OUT NOW

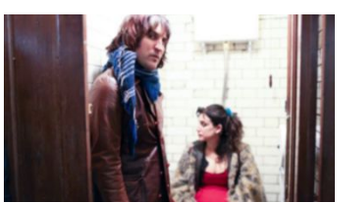
Neatly timed post *Wonder Woman*, writer-director Angela Robinson's drama is one eye-opening origin story. Delving into the genesis of DC Comics' most famous female superhero, it tells of William Moulton Marston (Luke Evans), a psychologist who was inspired by his polyamorous relationship with his wife, Elizabeth (Rebecca Hall), and student Olive Byrne (Bella Heathcote) to create everyone's favourite Amazon.

While the script is structured around the '40s scandal that threatened to engulf the comic – when regulators accused Marston of perverting young minds by filling the pages with S&M imagery – Marston's ménage-à-trois forms the emotional stitching. Sensitively, Robinson avoids titillation to depict the trio as loving partners and parents.

Evans is robust as Marston, Hall sharp as Elizabeth and Heathcote luminous as Olive. How it feeds into Wonder Woman – right down to her bracelets – is fascinating, providing an unexpected peek at the blueprint for a feminist icon. ***James Mottram***

THE VERDICT

Whether or not you're a fan of Wonder Woman, this tale of her creation is rich, evocative and enlightening.



BRAKES

★★★☆☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

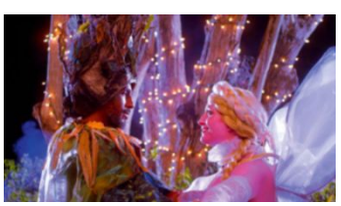
There's more accident than design to this debut comedy from Mercedes Grower, a patchwork of meet-cutes and messy break-ups that shows us the latter before backtracking to the former. Filmed over four years, it's essentially nine shorts spliced together, with a few star names (Julia Davis, Noel Fielding) and an air of lovelorn melancholy. The odd chuckle of recognition helps paper over technical deficiencies. ***Neil Smith***



HUMAN FLOW

★★★★☆ OUT 8 DECEMBER

The subject of 2012 doc *Never Sorry*, Chinese artist-activist Ai Weiwei turns director for a stirring study of the refugee crisis. Spanning 23 countries and four continents, the globetrotting canvas may be too broad for some. Yet the cumulative effect is overwhelming. Poetically shot by a dozen DoPs, including Christopher Doyle, a powerful portrait of horror, hope and humanity emerges. ***James Mottram***



A CARIBBEAN DREAM

★★★☆☆ OUT NOW

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is retold in modern-day Barbados, charting the tangled love lives of unsuspecting islanders as fairies wreak amorous havoc. Shakirah Bourne's feature has a strong sense of place, with the colours of the Caribbean lending rich texture to the Bard's joyous text. However, the film is held back by cut-rate special effects. ***Tim Coleman***



LOST IN PARIS

★★★☆☆ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

From multi-talented Belgian/Canadian duo Dominique Abel and his partner Fiona Gordon comes a slice of light-hearted whimsy. Gordon's a Canadian librarian who receives a plea for help from aged Aunt Martha (Emmanuelle Riva) in Paris; she arrives to find Martha's vanished, but a rascally down-and-out (Abel) is unavoidable. Think Jacques Tati crossed with Laurel and Hardy. ***Philip Kemp***



THE DINNER

★★★☆☆ OUT 8 DECEMBER

After *Time Out Of Mind*, writer-director Oren Moverman and star Richard Gere reunite for a less assured drama about politics, power and parenthood. Two brothers (Gere, Steve Coogan) and their wives (Rebecca Hall, Laura Linney) meet to discuss an unseemly incident involving their offspring. Loaded with flashbacks, it's unevenly mounted but kept watchable by the lively script and classy cast. ***James Mottram***



MOUNTAIN

★★★★☆ OUT 15 DECEMBER

Majestically scored by the Australian Chamber Orchestra and evocatively narrated by Willem Dafoe, this spectacular docu-essay from Jennifer Peedom (*Sherpa*) explores why mountains exert such a hold on our collective imagination. Tracing how the world's peaks came to be viewed as playgrounds, it needs to be seen on the big screen for its vertiginous images of high-altitude adventurers. ***Tom Dawson***



MOUNTAINS MAY DEPART

★★★☆☆ OUT 15 DECEMBER

Over three time periods (and three aspect ratios), Jia Zhangke charts China's growing pains via a modern melodrama about capitalism, cancer and the Pet Shop Boys' cover of 'Go West'. It's mostly a piercing study of haves and have nots, but its vision of progress falls apart in the final third, not least because Jia suddenly sidelines his muse, the brilliant Tao Zhao. ***Simon Kinnear***



THE BIG HEAT

★★★★★ OUT 24 NOVEMBER

Between car bombs and cruel burns, Fritz Lang's 1953 thriller is noir played lean, tough and keen. As in *M*, the stench of corruption overwhelms as homely dick Glenn Ford's 'suicide' investigation compromises him. Extremes of light/shade are tight-focused in ace turns from a malignant Lee Marvin and vivacious Gloria Grahame, while Lang's direction kicks hard: just like a shot of hot, black coffee. ***Kevin Harley***

CERTIFICATE 15 **DIRECTOR** Dave McCary **STARRING** Kyle Mooney, Mark Hamill, Claire Danes, Matt Walsh **SCREENPLAY** Kevin Costello, Kyle Mooney **DISTRIBUTOR** Sony **RUNNING TIME** 97 mins

BRIGSBY BEAR

Furry-tale ending...

★★★★☆ OUT 8 DECEMBER

Meet James Pope (Kyle Mooney). He's your average geeky kid, obsessing over his favourite TV show and eagerly dissecting it with buddies online. James, though, is hardly average. He's an abductee who's been kept captive since infancy by 'parents' (Mark Hamill, Jane Adams) who have concocted everything – an underground bunker in the desert, a scare story about toxic air, even the programme he idolises – to keep him ignorant of, and a secret from, the wider world.

So far, so *Room*. Yet *Brigsby Bear* – named after the genial, ursine protagonist of the show only James has seen – quickly sets its hero free, initiating an odd, hilarious and unexpectedly moving journey of self-discovery for a young man suddenly presented with a new life, family and identity. His crutch, quixotically, is Brigsby, a cuddly phantom he resolves to revive in order to make sense of his radically altered circumstances.

What follows is a weird, subversive yet generally good-natured homage to the creative urge, peppered with a nerdy nostalgia. And it's led by a goofily endearing turn from *SNL* regular Mooney, with more than a whiff of Dana Carvey's *Wayne's World* doofus Garth. ***Neil Smith***

THE VERDICT

An outlandish high concept is a recipe for hope and humour in a film that bears viewing more than once.



With the birthday party well and truly missed, he regretted trusting the sat-nav.

CERTIFICATE 12A **DIRECTOR** Taika Waititi **STARRING** Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Cate Blanchett, Tessa Thompson, Tom Hiddleston, Jeff Goldblum **SCREENPLAY** Eric Pearson, Craig Kyle, Christopher Yost **DISTRIBUTOR** Disney **RUNNING TIME** 130 mins

THOR: RAGNAROK

Hammer and rib-tickle...

★★★★☆ OUT NOW

When a Twitter follower asked Thor 3's director if a certain job opening in another major saga might lead to a "@TaikaWaititi #StarWars movie", his reply was chuckle-some. "Lolz. I like to complete my films."

Despite the *Thor* saga's past issues with departing directors, Taika Waititi completes his Asgard trip with style. While *Ragnarok* delivers the mythical soap-opera business expected from the MCU, Waititi blows away *The Dark World*'s indistinct hammer thuds with blasts of comic air. Those 'Asgardians Of The Galaxy' puns will stick: *Ragnarok* is the MCU's funniest outing yet and its clearest beneficiary of a playful director's voice since *Guardians*.

The drollery arrives fast with a belly-laugh piss-take of monologue-ing monsters and a mock-macho meeting with Karl Urban's Skurge. Anthony Hopkins also has fun impersonating Loki impersonating Odin, before returning as real Odin to warn Thor (Chris Hemsworth) of a bigger menace than Loki (Tom Hiddleston, refreshingly re-deployed as an ensemble player).

Enter Cate Blanchett's Hela, Goddess of Death, who crushes Thor's sense of his manhood (his hammer), occupies Asgard and – effectively – boots Thor/Loki to the retro-hedonist planet that time forgot: Sakaar, where ancient Rome meets Studio 54.

Between Jeff Goldblum's delirious Grandmaster, his goofy guards and the mismatched colour schemes, this gleeful planet-disco sojourn sends *Ragnarok*'s camp dial shrieking into the red. It's like the *Flash Gordon* reboot you never dared hope for, complete with a power-boosting synth score from Devo veteran Mark Mothersbaugh.

Ragnarok finds its supremely funny footing here, starting the minute Tessa Thompson's perma-drunk Valkyrie swipes Hiddleston's comic scene-stealing crown. Hemsworth is also terrifically tapped for self-mocking mirth. After a riotous workmates' reunion in the gladiator arena, Thor and Mark Ruffalo's best-movie-Hulk-yet maintain the mock-male comic momentum beautifully as sniping men-children in their apartment-sharing intimacy, knob gags included.

A buddy romp folded into a pop space opera, it's a setup that recalls Waititi and Jemaine Clement's vamp-com *What We Do In The Shadows*. And, lest you doubted his ownership, Waititi makes every one-liner kill as the voice of rock revolutionary Korg the Kronan, whose misunderstanding (perhaps...) of Thor's special bond with Mjölnir numbers among the many gags you might miss through the laughter.

Blanchett, meanwhile, faces her own gladiatorial battle: with the curse of the squandered Marvel villains. She wins by dint of blazing charisma, but is underused, reduced to oozing malignantly around Asgard. Aside from a brought-to-heel Skurge, Hela lacks someone to bounce off.

But every character gets to shine in the end-stretch. Waititi's variant on Marvel's climactic mega-rucks suffers from 'giant CGI thing' cliché, but it gives each lead their moment, lands Hulk's best sight-gag yet, and opens vistas of promise for Thor's return in *Infinity War* and beyond. Here's hoping Waititi returns for Thor 4, assuming he's free. After this rocket up Asgard's rump, he'll surely be in heightened demand, whether *Star Wars* wants him or not... ***Kevin Harley***

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

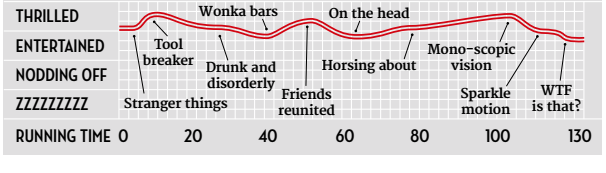
FLASH GORDON *1980*
Gordon's alive! So's the scenery, virtually, in this lurid, lewd panto adventure.

DEAR WHITE PEOPLE *2014*
Thompson gives *Gremlins* a good shake-down in a sharp-edged, indie-pitched satire.

HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE *2014*
Odd couples, beast attacks, zig-zag plots... Waititi's bush-bonding beaut pre-empts *Ragnarok*.

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THE VERDICT

Quoth Thor: "Yes!" A buoyant comic blast of excess-all-areas colour and character, Waititi's MCU entry gives old Shakespeare-in-the-park an injection of full-bore fun.



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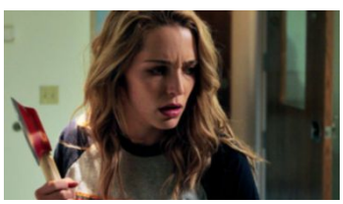


Thor didn't quite share Hulk's enthusiasm for chest bumping...

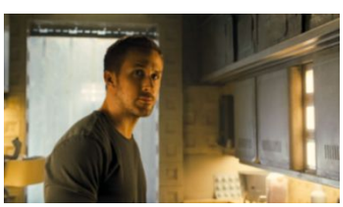
BOX OFFICE CHARTS 02.10.17 – 29.10.17



THOR: RAGNAROK
How about that surprise cameo? ICYMI, Thor's shorn-off mullet tearfully reunites with its owner, explaining hey, it's OK, because it's got an "85 per cent definite" gig on the next *Stranger Things*.



HAPPY DEATH DAY
Cynics are saying this is just *Groundhog Day* meets *Scream*. But if you can sleep tight after seeing a murderous marmot lurking in the porch in a ghost-face mask, you're a lot braver than *Big Screen*.



BLADE RUNNER 2049
Never mind the whole "is he or isn't he?" thing. What we really want to know is, what are the opening hours of Doctor Badger's surgery? And does he treat alcoholism? Specifically in pets.

UK TOP 10



Pos	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT
1	**Blade Runner 2049** ★★★★★	£17.4M	£17.4M	4
2	**Thor: Ragnarok** ★★★★	£12.4M	£12.4M	1
3	**Kingsman: The Golden Circle** ★★★	£8.6M	£24.2M	6
4	**The Lego Ninjago Movie** ★★★	£8.2M	£8.2M	3
5	**Geostorm** N/A	£3.3M	£3.3M	2
6	**The Snowman** ★★	£3.1M	£3.1M	3
7	**It** ★★★★	£2.7M	£32.1M	8
8	**Victoria & Abdul** ★★★★	£2.7M	£9.7M	7
9	**My Little Pony** N/A	£2.6M	£2.6M	2
10	**The Death Of Stalin** ★★★★	£2.5M	£2.5M	2

US TOP 10



Pos	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT
1	**Blade Runner 2049** ★★★★★	$81.4M	$81.4M	4
2	**Happy Death Day** N/A	$48.4M	$48.4M	3
3	**Tyler Perry's Boo 2!** N/A	$35.6M	$35.6M	2
4	**It** ★★★★	$32.5M	$323.7M	8
5	**American Made** ★★★★	$31.5M	$48.5M	5
6	**Kingsman: The Golden Circle** ★★★	£30.6M	$97.3M	6
7	**The Foreigner** N/A	$28.8M	$28.8M	3
8	**The Mountain Between Us** ★★★	$28M	$28M	4
9	**Geostorm** N/A	$23.6M	$23.6M	2
10	**The Lego Ninjago Movie** ★★★	$20.8M	$56.4M	6



THE MOUNTAIN BETWEEN US
One for the 'films you shouldn't see on planes' list, alongside *Sully*, *Flight* and *The Grey*. Or *Fifty Shades Of Grey*. Anything with 'grey'. Nature's dullest shade is clearly a red flag in cinema.

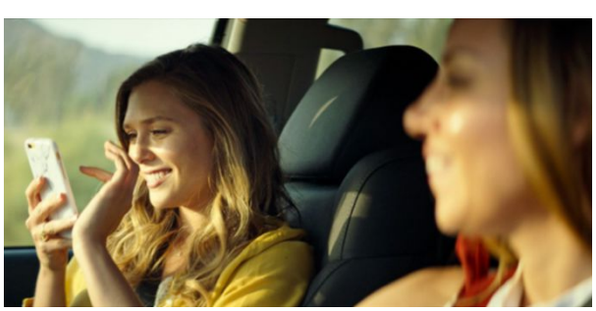


THE SNOWMAN
Let's hope the cheery title didn't deceive any innocent kids; they've already seen one Michael Fassbender non-franchise-starter this year (*Assassin's Creed*), they don't need to see another!



GEOSTORM
Dean Devlin's directorial debut shows that he's moved on from making cartoonishly overblown über-disaster movies with Roland Emmerich. He's making them by himself now instead.

STILL OUT, STILL GOOD... OUR PICK OF THE MOVIES OUT NOW

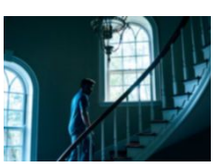


INGRID GOES WEST ★★★★☆

"Smartly played piece that both lampoons social media users and explores the darker side of our need for validation through others... A superb satirical swipe at the worst excesses of the Instagram generation. Deserves a lot of 'likes'."







GOOD TIME ★★★★☆

"Robert Pattinson plays a blinder in this gritty grindhouse-meets-arthouse heist movie... Nerve-shredding and blackly comic, it's a pulpy thrill-ride."

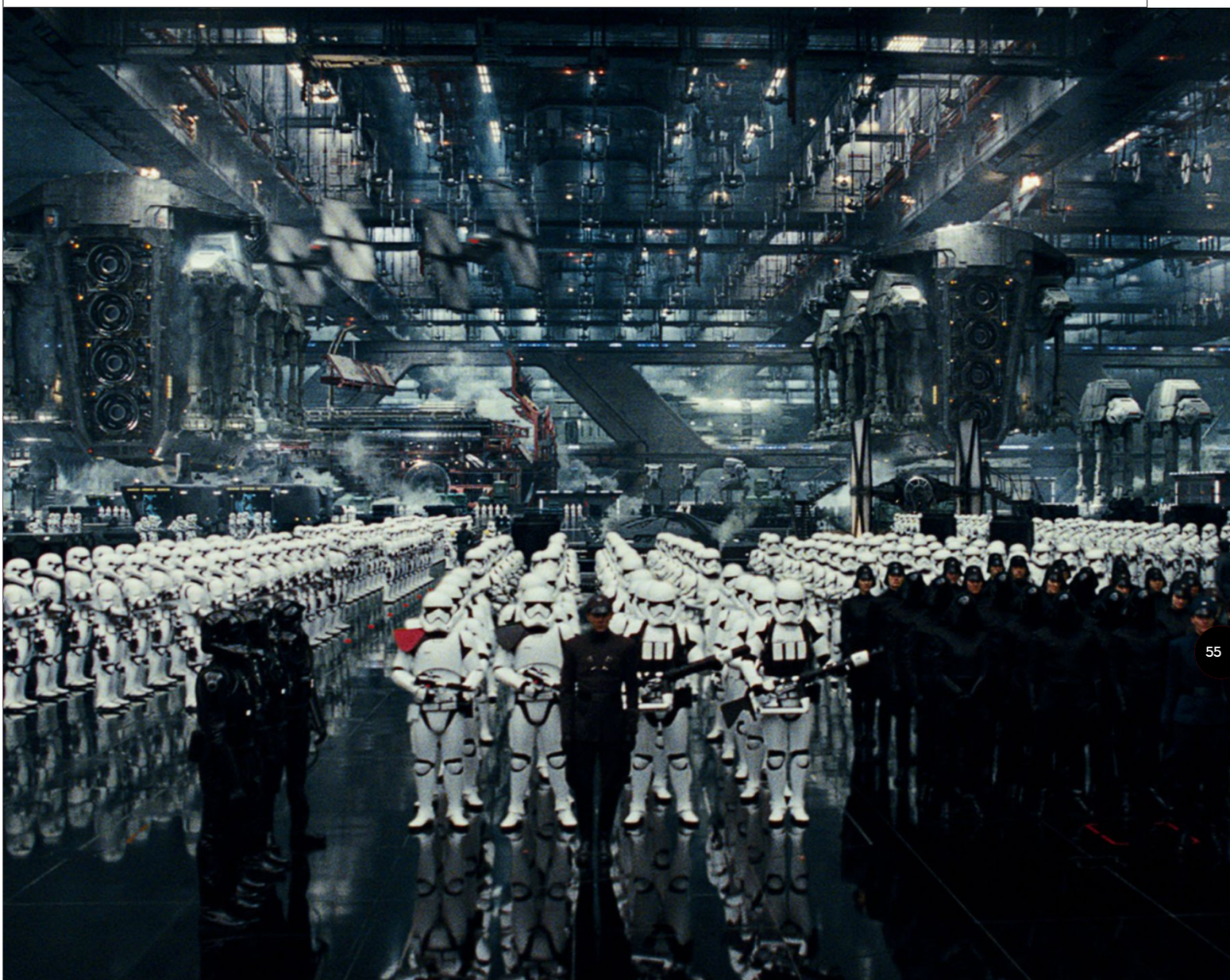
THE FLORIDA PROJECT ★★★★★

"Poverty and poetry, delinquency and deluxe wonder... this child's-eye view of lives on a knife-edge is terrific, with crackerjack turns from a non-pro cast."

THE KILLING OF A SACRED DEER ★★★★☆

"A step yet further into the weird from Yorgos Lanthimos. Often distressing, but compulsively watchable."

COMING SOON THE BIG HITTERS ON THE CARDS FOR NEXT MONTH...



STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI

OUT 14 DECEMBER

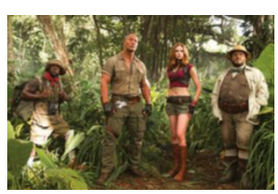
For the third year running, it's Sith-mas time! Millions of voices suddenly squawked like excitable porgs after trailer two, where Rian Johnson left us fumbling in the lusciously dark red/black colour scheme with questions. Such as, how will we cope with every Carrie Fisher scene? Will Kylo learn the difference between right and Ren? He's got his saber back – now, has anyone seen the skin from Luke's robo-hand? For these reasons and more, we're praying Johnson's nailed the *Empire*-class upgrade to J.J.'s *New Hope* revivalism. For more Jed-eye'd insight, screen-wipe to the very next page...



PITCH PERFECT 3

OUT 20 DECEMBER

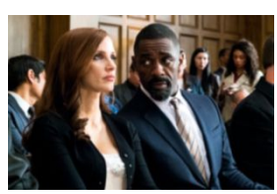
You're gonna miss 'em when they're gone. So, karao-key in to the Bellas' farewell, where Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson et al realise reality sucks and reunite the band. Expect extreme "pitch" puns, plus the sense that if *3*'s not aca-lamity box office-wise, *4* will follow. Page 20 for more, pitches.



JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

OUT 20 DECEMBER

OK, so we wanted to see Jack Black wearing Karen Gillan's costume, but this reboot could shock-drop dollops of seasonal fun. The Rock's veins and Kevin Hart's comic pains take the strain in an adventure-romp videogame rethink. For more Gillan, Juman-jump to page 74.



MOLLY'S GAME

OUT 26 DECEMBER

From the sublime (*California Split*) to the soporific (*Lucky You*), gambling movies' strike-rate is choppy. But our money's on *Molly* dealing, since writer/director Aaron Sorkin spins the machine-gun monologues and Jessica Chastain speaks them. More rat-a-tat Sorkin chat on page 78.



NEW ORDER

In **THE LAST JEDI**, Rey teams up with Luke Skywalker – but he's not the man we remember. And that's not the only shock. Total Film talks to the key players about the Star Wars movie that changes everything.

WORDS MATT MAYTUM





LUKE ALERT
Rey (Daisy Ridley) confronts Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) on Ahch-To.



"Luke Skywalker has vanished," announced the opening crawl to *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. And vanished he remained, for pretty much the entire running time of the seventh instalment in the space saga. Sure, his presence hung heavily over that film, the first *Star Wars* movie in a decade, and the first to follow on from the events of 1983's *Return Of The Jedi*. Luke ended that particular film a pretty well-balanced Jedi Knight, having helped destroy the evil Empire while resolving some of his daddy issues with Darth Vader. He was last spotted at a victory celebration on Endor, watched over by the Force ghosts of Obi-Wan Kenobi, Yoda and Vader/Anakin. What could go wrong?

Cut to 30 years later and the events of *The Force Awakens*, and Luke is nowhere to be seen – save for a brief flashback – until the final moment when he's handed his trusty lightsaber by Rey (Daisy Ridley), a young scavenger from the desert planet Jakku who has recently discovered Force sensitivities of her own. The long hair and grey beard can't disguise the tormented scowl of the galaxy's original golden boy. This is not the Luke we remember.

As Mark Hamill himself puts it to *TF*, "It's shocking to hear Luke say, 'I know only one truth: it's time for the Jedi to end' – the last time we saw him, he was the most optimistic character. He was sort of at the peak of his powers, and you would imagine that he'd then become a Jedi master and train other people and so forth. What has happened to him that has so traumatised him into where he is now?"

That is the question that drives *The Last Jedi*, aka *Episode VIII*. In 2015, J.J. Abrams' *The Force Awakens* was a critical and commercial smash, putting *Star Wars* back on top (after the plastic prequels squandered fan goodwill), scoring more than $2bn at the global box office and an overwhelmingly positive response. Last year's standalone 'Story' *Rogue One* was also a hit to the tune of $1bn, proving that the world was ready for adventures outside





SILVER SERVICE
Gwendoline Christie returns as Captain Phasma.

the core episodic structure. But now we're back to the narrative throughline of Rey, Kylo Ren, Finn, Poe… and of course, Leia and Luke. (The journey of the former, who we've seen go from orphan to princess to spy to senator to general of the Resistance during the franchise, is apparently unaltered in *The Last Jedi*, despite Carrie Fisher's death meaning this will be her last *Star Wars* movie.)

"Watching the film, there's going to be a very emotional reaction to what she does in this movie," says *TLJ* director Rian Johnson. The indie auteur behind *Brick*, *The Brothers Bloom* and *Looper*, he's something of a Padawan when it comes to blockbuster filmmaking on this scale. Johnson's the only person besides George Lucas to have a solo writer-director credit on a *Star Wars* movie, and it seems he used that autonomy to make some pretty bold choices, even in a series celebrated for its twists. Hamill even famously told Johnson, "'I pretty much fundamentally disagree with every choice you've made for [*Luke*]," before he came round to Johnson's way of thinking (and he's now hoping the audience will have the same reaction). Daisy Ridley was similarly surprised when she first read the *Episode VIII* script. "I had certain [*expectations*] of what I thought would happen [*in the story*] and then I was taken aback by what did happen," she explains. "I went and talked to Rian about it and then you're like, 'Oh, OK.' Hearing the thing from the person as to what it is that they are picturing made it all seem great instead of nerve-wracking."

To speak to Johnson himself, it's hard to imagine he could ever cause shock or worry in an actor, given his politeness and warmth. And despite the fact he's taken the characters from *The Force Awakens* and pulled them out of their comfort zone, he admits to being driven by his own intense *Star Wars* fandom. He also asserts that the film will very much be a continuation of *The Force Awakens*: narratively, stylistically, tonally. "As much as I could I was trying to [*maintain the tone*], because it's a continuous story," he says. "And in fact, you know, some of the things we do get a little heavier in this movie, but I was very conscious of trying to continue the tone from the last movie… It was delightful. It was a blast. And I didn't want to lose that. I didn't want to descend into heaviosity with this movie." All that said, *The Last Jedi* will be anything but a repeat of *TFA*. "The second chapter has a much different function than the first chapter, and I knew there were going to be things that were

'I WAS VERY CONSCIOUS OF TRYING TO CONTINUE THE TONE FROM THE LAST MOVIE… IT WAS DELIGHTFUL'
RIAN JOHNSON



RUN, DROID, RUN!
BB-8 and Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac) head towards the fight.



SPACE OUT
There's no shortage of dogfight action in the new *Episode*.



BACK IN BLACK
Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) still enjoys a good brood.

different about it – just the same way that there are things that are different about *Empire* from *A New Hope*."

LUKE WHO'S TALKING

For all the impact of Luke's appearance at the end of *The Force Awakens*, something significant was missing. Dialogue. In person, Hamill couldn't be further from the sombre, taciturn Luke of the current movies. Garrulous and generous to a fault, an innocuous question leads to an anecdote avalanche – littered with spot-on impersonations of George Lucas, Harrison Ford and Alec Guinness – and our allotted time disappears faster than the Millennium Falcon on the Kessel Run.

When we meet in London's Rosewood Hotel, Hamill launches into a story about his original *Star Wars* audition process, totally unprompted. "And by the way, it got down to two sets of one Han, Luke and Leia, and another Han, Luke and Leia," he says. "They never mixed and matched. It was either Carrie, Harrison and me, or the three other people. Marcia Lucas [Star Wars *editor and George's ex-wife*] took credit for urging him, because he couldn't decide. So I always like to give her a shout-out, because it changed my life in so many wonderful ways."

While Luke Skywalker would become a role that would define his life, Hamill still felt some hesitance about returning to the franchise – something that chimes with Luke's own withdrawal from the world. "Well, it's the fear of the unknown," considers Hamill of his own reluctance. "Because I thought we had a beginning, middle and an end. What if we don't catch lightning in the bottle again? Fans can be so judgemental. They were hypercritical of some of the prequels. A lot of it, I think, was because it didn't go the way that they wanted it to go. And they became very possessive of this series."

In terms of relating to Luke's position, Hamill admits, "You always try to make some kind of a connection, even in a fantasy, to something in your own life… and maybe it's that failure to change the world the way I wanted it to be, that I could relate to as Luke not being able to accomplish what he wanted to accomplish." For Johnson, writing for Luke and pals was something of a childhood dream realised. "You type 'Luke Skywalker' into your screenplay program and then start typing dialogue, and you get chills," laughs Johnson. "Or Leia, you know? But also, I'll tell you the truth. As much as growing up with *Star Wars*, and that I was looking forward to working with Mark and Carrie, the thing that really hooked me – and I think hooked so many of the folks that are into these movies – is the new characters from *The Force Awakens*."

Much as audiences and *Star Wars* devotees were excited to see Han Solo, General Leia and Luke Skywalker return to the fold for another *Episode*, they were always set to be key supporting characters, rather than the leads. The new trilogy would have run out of steam













OLD & NEW
(below left) Finn meets Rose (Kelly Marie Tran); (below) Domhnall Gleeson returns as Hux.

SHIPSHAPE
(middle, top) Classic TIE fighters are joined by Kylo Ren's dramatic TIE silencer.

OUR PRINCESS
(middle, centre) Carrie Fisher in her final outing as Leia (sob).

AT-AT ATTACK
(middle, bottom) The Empire's long-legged war machines return in a new form, the AT-M6.

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CULTURE CLASH
John Boyega as Finn, coming up against his former boss.

pretty quickly if there weren't any new characters worth investing in. That's where Abrams struck gold, particularly with Rey, played by genuine overnight sensation Ridley. An orphaned scavenger, she found a family of sorts with Han Solo, Chewie and liberated stormtrooper turned Resistance fighter Finn. At the end of *TFA*, a lightsaber duel with Han's estranged son (and murderer) Kylo Ren began to unlock some of Rey's Force skills, and she would later head to Ahch-To to hand Luke his trusty 'saber. In a break from tradition, *The Last Jedi* will be the first *Star Wars* movie to pick up precisely where the last one finished.

> **'YOU ALWAYS TRY TO MAKE SOME KIND OF A CONNECTION TO SOMETHING IN YOUR OWN LIFE'**
> **MARK HAMILL**

NO JEDI IS AN ISLAND

That direct continuation meant yomping back to Skellig Michael, the Irish island that stood in for Ahch-To. Filming there before principal photography began in earnest, it meant that Johnson had "a couple of 'first' days, weirdly." A precarious location, it presented a number of challenges for Ridley. "Going to the toilet at the top of that island, I swear to God, that path was *this* big," she gestures, making not the most reassuring indication of its width. "And there was no railing. So you'd be walking, thinking, 'Why am I going to the toilet on the top of a cliff? And if I take a step to my right, will I fall to my death? And is this worth it?' So that was really, really surreal. And then it was sort of amazing actually because I think I remember [*thinking*], 'This is the most amazing view ever.'"

What little we know of the plot to *TLJ* suggests Luke will train up Rey as a Jedi. "Actors want to fall into the characters they're playing," is all Hamill offers when we ask him if the mentor/trainee relationship was reflected off-screen. For Ridley, this film brought a shedload of new stunts to tackle that would push her to her limits, including a mysterious underwater sequence. "The dive for me was probably the most scary and the most thrilling thing," she says. "The lightsaber stuff was great because I felt like I got a lot stronger and I could push myself a lot further than I thought I could the first time around... It sort of worked story-wise too, because as I was getting stronger with it, you would think in the story that was happening too. But the dive was my favourite thing. It was frickin' awesome."

Not that this new-found strength necessarily meant Ridley felt more



ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

Head of *Star Wars* creature shop Neal Scanlan talks porgs...

"When Rian Johnson first spoke about porgs, we did so many different designs. Without exaggeration, there must have been a hundred designs that we did based on this blend of: 'Are they puffin-like? Are they pug-like?'

"Eventually, Jake Lunt, one of our designers, drew this – dare I say it – egg-shaped entity with these little feet on it and these big eyes. In its simplicity, I think it completely touched Rian. So really, from there on, that was the one that he wanted to do, so we then defined it, and tried to look at, 'How do we make these things feel like they're real? That they could really exist as a seabird?'

"What would their chicks look like, for instance? I think you'll get to see what we call porglets, which are little chicks. And one, in particular, befriends Chewie. I won't spoil it, but there is a definite relationship between these characters in the film. And if you think the ones you've seen in the trailer are cute, you have not seen anything yet.

"We went to great lengths to try and sell their inquisitive, mischievous manner, but at the same time there is a real human connection, as well as a wookiee connection. [*laughs*]

"So I think Rian used them very much – and one in particular – as helping to take a breather for a moment, and to enjoy the other things that dwell within this galaxy.

"Somehow, I think, you might feel like you've seen a porg somewhere before – whether it's a barn owl, a puffin or a penguin; and that will hopefully be the joy, that when you see it, it's not so fantastical that you think, 'I can't relate to it.' It needs to be close enough for you to kind of go, 'Oh my God, it's a guinea pig with wings!'"



Q&A

LAURA DERN

The Oscar-winning star talks armour, Vader and extreme Rebelling...

What are you allowed to tell us about Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo?
Ugh. Isn't it hard to do these? [*laughs*] There's so little we can say. I mean, honestly, it's not as though I can say that much more to you until I, like you, have seen the movie. Because it's a mystery to me in some ways. But she is part of the Resistance, and she's there to sort of shake things up. And I have the most fantastic colour of hair. [*laughs*] These things I can tell you.

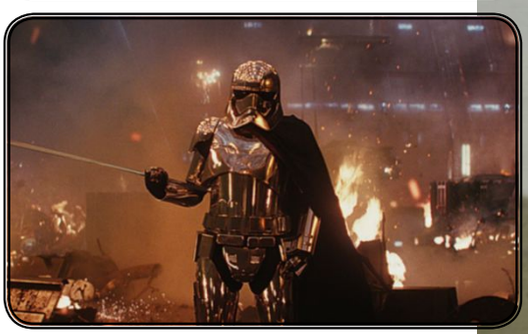
Amilyn looks very fancy for a Resistance member... What's the reasoning behind that?
Hmm. Interesting question. [*laughs*] I may ask that question myself. I think we're going to have to let that one unfold...

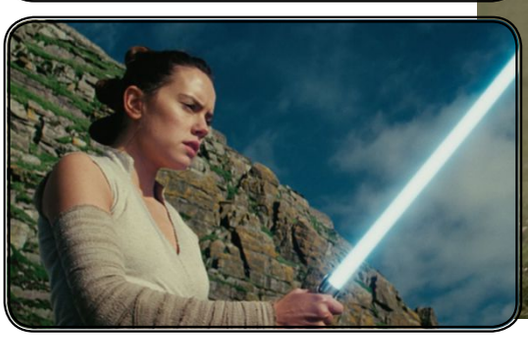
Is it true you couldn't resist doing the pew-pew noises when firing your blaster?
[*laughs*] It's 100 per cent true. It's so hilarious to me. I loved all of it. Every opportunity to be in what felt iconic to me, was just a dream.

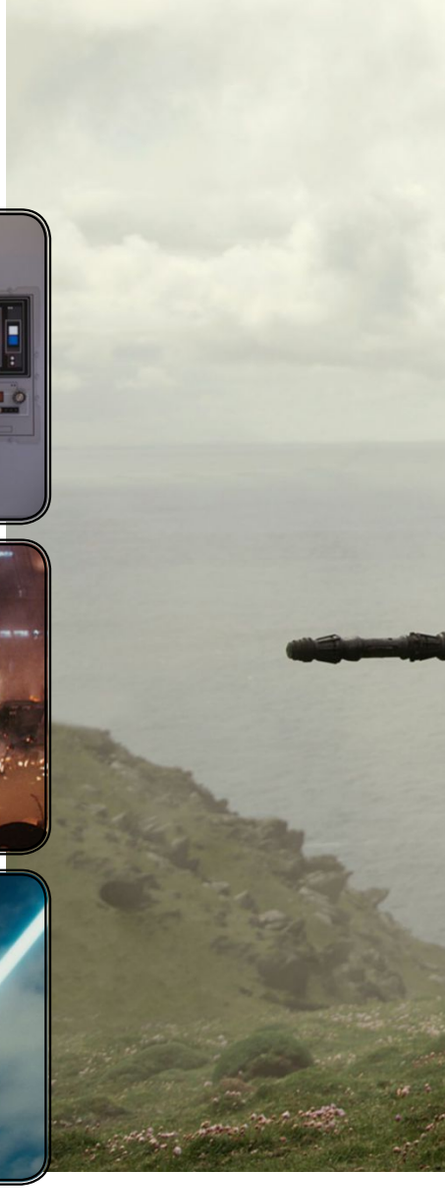
Did you fall for any of the practical creatures in the movie?
I remember Rian coming up to me a few days into filming and he said, "Oh, Laura, I'm sure you've met, but have you met Chewbacca?" I'm like, "Are you kidding me? [*dramatic pause*] No, I haven't met Chewbacca!" He's like, "Chewbacca, come and give Laura a hug!" Oh my God. I cried! It was so beautiful.

The *Jurassic Park* franchise has had a resurgence recently. Would you like Ellie to return in a future instalment?
I mean, come on! I've got a reckoning. Yeah, I'm ready to get back into that world, for sure. That would be fun. I know the boys have gone back. They've got to get the girl back. ***MM***









confident going into the sequel after the overwhelmingly positive response to *TFA*. "I found it much more scary, honestly," she gasps. "I felt way more neurotic the whole way through. Because with the first one, I was lost in the whole journey of it, and on this one, I was much more aware of what was going on every day. Like, it felt more visceral. The first one felt like a dream the whole time." And when audiences massively embrace your character, that only heightens the weight of expectations. "There's a responsibility and a sort of feeling to uphold that people have connected to. So I actually found it a lot more scary, but also very rewarding."

With Johnson thrusting the characters in unexpected directions, Rey is split from Finn, her fellow stowaway in *TFA*, as the story demands that she share the screen with Luke. Boyega's Finn – who was left comatose at the close of the last film – will return to action in a mission that will take him away from Rey and towards the bright lights of obscenely wealthy casino planet Canto Bight. "Finn got a back injury and the Resistance is at its lowest point it's ever been and they are very, very weak at the moment," Boyega explains. "And so, for him, he has chosen to do this crazy mission."

NEW BLOOD

Finn's mission allies him with a couple of the galaxy's fresh arrivals, including Resistance member Rose, played by newcomer Kelly Marie Tran. Pausing to consider what she *can* actually tell us about Rose, Tran offers, "She works in maintenance, and she is really good at what she does..." She pauses. "I keep saying she is not cool. I don't want people to misinterpret that. By that, I mean she is not like this muscly superhero that you can never be. She's this everywoman character. Like, what would you do as a normal human being if you got pulled into this?"

Finn and Rose end up having to form a cautious alliance with the film's mysterious 'DJ' (Benicio Del Toro), a 'slicer' (read: hacker), whose particular set of skills the pair find themselves in need of. A quick Google search will reveal the meaning behind Del Toro's initialled moniker, but we'll leave that out for now for the spoiler-averse. Suffice to say, he's probably not *entirely*

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trustworthy. He's one of a handful of fresh faces introduced in *TLJ*. In terms of the new characters, Tran is particularly stoked for audiences to see DJ and Laura Dern's Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo (see Q&A, opposite). "I think they bring a lot of cool, different energy into a franchise like this," she says.

Also to watch out for in this instalment are new creatures, such as the already beloved porgs (see boxout p61), an insanely cute birdlike species that resides on Ahch-To. We'll also see close-up glimpses of the First Order's Supreme Leader Snoke (Andy Serkis), no longer hiding behind a hologram. Captain Phasma will return to clash with Finn. And if the final trailer is anything to go by, the parallels between Rey and Kylo Ren (a former apprentice of Luke's gone rogue, remember) will become even more apparent.

"From the script [*of* The Force Awakens], to seeing the film for the first time, I felt like the dynamic between those two is fascinating and complicated and had a lot of potential," grins Johnson. "That was one of the things I was really excited to figure out ways to get into, on this one." The gasp-inducing sign-off to the trailer suggests Rey reaches out to Kylo to "show me my place in all of this", although Johnson assures us that if you've seen the trailer, you shouldn't think you know it all. "We all love the trailer because we look at it and we say, 'God, it looks like it sells the cow, but it doesn't.' Not because it's tricky or it's misleading you, but because there's just a lot more… It doesn't give you answers, it gives you questions, which is terrific."

END GAME

Johnson also jokes that making the middle chapter is "so much easier". "I just found it really fun, having had a great setup with these characters, and to then delve into each of them, and then to leave it in a place similar to what I felt on *The Force Awakens*… You're excited for what comes next." Not that you should expect anything 'middling' about *The Last Jedi*. "I did want the audience to feel like they've had a full meal, and they're excited a few years from now for what comes next."

Perhaps the biggest shock relating to the whole production was the fact the film itself was completely finished almost three whole months ahead of its release date, pretty much unheard of in this age of blockbusters being subjected to tweaks and adjustments right up to the 11th hour. Johnson's longtime producing partner Ram Bergman expresses no surprise that Johnson has smashed it. "Rian is very specific," Bergman says. "It makes preparation so much easier. It's efficient."

The jury will soon be in on where Johnson's effort rates in the canon, but for now he has the bittersweet experience of handing back the reins to J.J. Abrams, who is returning to the saga to direct *Episode IX* after Colin Trevorrow departed due to creative differences with Lucasfilm. "J.J.'s seen several cuts of the movie, and he read a few drafts of the script," says Johnson. "He's been a great cheerleader through the whole process, and with very helpful notes. But that was all in context of just wanting his opinion as a filmmaker. That was before he was doing *IX*. We've had a couple of very small conversations, but nothing substantive about *IX*. But the truth is, I'm not really going to be involved at all."

> **'THE LAST JEDI FELT MORE VISCERAL. THE FIRST FILM FELT LIKE A DREAM'**
> **DAISY RIDLEY**

With the picture locked, Johnson will effectively step back from the franchise, and resume following it as a fan. "It's very similar to the handoff between *VII* and *VIII*. I kind of took it to a place, and now I'm going to hand the baton off and step back." Johnson calls this "a complicated thing", but can't hide his glee when it comes to putting him back in the position of a punter once more, excited for what the future of the franchise holds. "I'm psyched," he grins. "I can't wait to sit back and just be an audience member again, and I'm really excited to see how J.J. finishes all this off."

STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI OPENS ON 14 DECEMBER.

SEA VIEW
(above) Daisy Ridley braves the Atlantic elements on Ireland's Skellig Michael, aka Ahch-To.

ISLAND LOCALS
(below) One of the Caretakers of Ahch-To.



ADDITIONAL REPORTING: JENNY COONEY CARRILLO



KNIGHT FEVER

Monks, warriors, crazy old hermits, muppets or just big fibbers? Total Film traces the journeys of the Jedi through films, books and games, from Kurosawa to Coruscant and beyond...

WORDS KEVIN HARLEY

A Jedi's strength flows from the Force. But a space-opera visionary's inspirations flow from elsewhere: from books they've read, movies they've seen and arty short films that not a lot of other people have seen.

Crack open the shell of the Jedi and the first face shown might belong to Japanese auteur Akira Kurosawa. Introduced to Kurosawa's classics by fellow filmmaker John Milius, a young George Lucas borrowed the peasants from *The Hidden Fortress* (for C-3PO and R2-D2) and more besides for his Jedi. 'Jedi' echoes 'Jidaigeki', the Japanese word for period dramas. Darth Vader's get-up mirrored imperial armour; samurai kimonos, meanwhile, influenced Obi-Wan Kenobi's togs and title – an 'obi' is a kimono sash. Lucas considered Kurosawa favourite Toshirô Mifune for the role of Kenobi, though Mifune declined. And you don't need Force schooling to link katanas to lightsabers, or *Seven Samurai*'s Kambei Shimada to Yoda.

But Kurosawa was just one flavour in Lucas' culture-soup. Consider Edgar Rice Burroughs' lords of Barsoom, the Jed or Jeddak. Shamanic anthropologist Carlos Castaneda's 1974 book *Tales Of Power* featured talk of life forces. Tracing humanity's belief in magic, James George Frazer's earlier anthropological doorstop *The Golden Bough* (1890) pre-empted various Jedi-ologies. And mythologist Joseph Campbell's 1949 book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* offered a Jedi route-map in its cartography of narrative archetypes: mentors, oracles, temptation, the road of trials and such like.

Historical influences included medieval warrior monks the Knights Templar. Modern influences, meanwhile, included avant-garde filmmaker Arthur Lipsett's short *21-87*, which sampled AI pioneer Warren S. McCulloch and cinematographer

FEEL THE FORCE

Daniel M. Jones launched the Church of Jediism from Wales in 2007. In his own words, here's how...

MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION

When I was four or five, my parents rented *Return Of The Jedi* on VHS. I watched it so much I wore the tape out! And because of my autism I didn't play with toys, so I just collected *Star Wars* action figures and memorabilia. It grew into this obsession, like a storm.

TALKING CENSUS

In 2001, I was part of the Jedi census phenomenon [*movement urging people to record their religion as Jedi*]. I was at the forefront of spreading this campaign on Yahoo, chatrooms and stuff. But it wasn't until six years later that I actioned it into something that I was going to do.

CASTING THE NET

I searched the internet for like-minded people and realised many people were looking for something, so I wanted to formulate something online. I always wanted to help people. That's human nature but with my condition, I obsess over things. And I obsessed over wanting to change the world for the better.

TUNING IN

Everybody at some point in life is fascinated by the idea that we could all be connected, or that psychokinesis could be a thing. I think that's the attraction of Jediism. What if you can get in tune with the universe, find out what is going on underneath and understand yourself?

LOST SOULS

I feel like a lot of people are lost. They feel spiritual but they don't understand it. Spirituality has got a bad name, but caring for people or feeling empathy – that's being spiritual, because you're in touch with the field around you. Jediism is about re-educating people on how they see spirituality.

OUR ONLY HOPE

The mid-'90s to mid-'00s was the calm before the storm in society. We're now in the storm version, but this will pass. What I'm trying to say with Jediism is, look into yourself to help move society forward. I'm just trying to help guide a few thousand people in that direction.

BECOME THE FORCE: 9 LESSONS ON HOW TO BE A JEDI MASTER BY DANIEL M. JONES IS PUBLISHED BY WATKINS PUBLISHING

Roman Kroitor discussing "some kind of force" in nature and human connections. Lucas' Force was, quoth master George, "an echo of that phrase". From Lipsett to *The Last Jedi*, that echo hasn't stopped reverberating.

OLD REPUBLICANS

According to Legends, a longer time ago than *The Phantom Menace*'s opening crawl, the Jedi were monastic protectors of justice in the Galactic Republic for more than a thousand generations. At one point, roughly 10,000 Jedi Knights were active. Going by the RPG game of the same name, the *Knights Of The Old Republic* included 'saber-swingers such as Jolee Bindo. They occupied temples and outposts from Lothal to Coruscant, where the 12-strong Jedi High Council enjoyed plush CG-skyline views on a high floor over the Jedi Archives.

TWO TRIBES

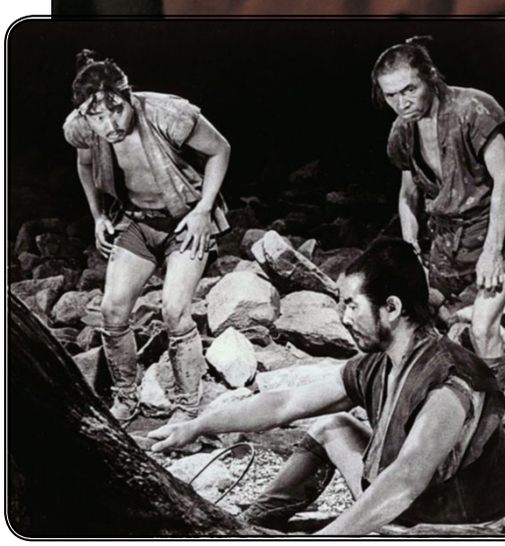
A Jedi lives in contemplation of the Force, an energy what-not that binds the galaxy together and flows through every living thing. They observe a monkish life without desire, or at least try to – love was a problem for Jedi ranging from comics character Reess Kairn to Anakin Skywalker.

Close meditation on the Force could help adherents develop telekinetic, precognitive and persuasive powers. Yet – surprise – these were open to abuse. Several thousand years pre-*The Phantom Menace*, a wayward Jedi quit contemplating, embraced Dark Side emotions (anger, fear) and ushered in the Hundred-Year Darkness, giving rise to the Sith. Their black-clad number included Darth Bane, who established The Rule of Two: the edict that there could only be two Sith in existence at a time, master and apprentice. The Jedi believed the Sith extinct after the Jedi-Sith War, but they were wrong. As Yoda said, "Hard to see, the Dark Side is." He didn't get to be Grand Master for nothing.

TEMPLE TUTELAGE

Tread carefully: here be midi-chlorians. Jedi aptitude could be measured by checking children's bloodstreams for midi-chlorians, microscopic organisms that talk with the Force. With barely time for a nappy change, children with a notable midi-count were whisked to Coruscant to train as Younglings. Training included a trip to the Temple of Ilum for The Gathering, a trial to find the kyber crystals that form the heart













of a lightsaber. While constructing and contemplating their 'sabers, Younglings graduated to Padawans, with hair braids (if their species has hair) as proof. Padawan graduates became Knights, who underwent further trials to become Masters. Within these ranks existed other roles: guardians, consular, sentinels and more.

WHY SO SIDIOUS

The Jedi helped maintain peace in the Galactic Republic for generations, engaging in missions of diplomacy and police-work. Prominent members of the High Council included Mace Windu and Yoda, alongside Plo Koon, Yaddle, Kit Fisto, Yarael Poof and others.

The Sith were thought extinct until Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn and his Padawan Obi-Wan Kenobi met Darth Maul, horned devil from the dark-magic planet of Dathomir and apprentice to Darth Sidious. Meanwhile, young Anakin fatefully became Obi-Wan's apprentice, despite Yoda's unsettling reservation that he was too old to start training (er, nine).

The convoluted story that followed involved conflict in the High Council, the secret formation of a Clone Army, a Separatist Crisis and the machinations of senator-with-secrets Palpatine, aka Darth Sidious. This seething Sith Lord planted a chip in the clones that turned them against the Jedi. After he manipulated Skywalker's emotions, drew the angry young man to the Dark Side and re-christened him Darth Vader, Sidious smeared the Jedi's reputation and accelerated their demise.

EXILE ON TV

Between *Attack Of The Clones* and *Revenge Of The Sith*, the Jedi fought as commanders and generals in the Grand Army of the Republic. This period features in animated series *The Clone Wars*, where Anakin's Padawan Ahsoka Tano reestablishes the idea of Force-sensitive fighters who aren't necessarily Jedi. Besides providing insights into Anakin's downfall, *The Clone Wars* is richly braided with Jedi/Force lore. We learn about Yoda's mission to discover the secrets of eternal consciousness. We discover Holocrons, storage devices that preserve holographic information for adept Force-niks. And we learn more about Maul (he lives!) and his beefcake bro Savage Opress. The Dark Side has all the best names.

Another animated series, *Rebels*, details the Rebellion's rise post-*Revenge Of The Sith*. We meet Jedi survivors of Palpatine's purge, such as blind Jedi Kanan Jarrus, whose Padawan is the street-smart Ezra Bridger. Stuffed with Jedi intrigue, *Rebels* also introduces the Inquisitors: Force-wielding, meat-eating hunter-assassins for the Empire tasked with converting or executing Jedi.

THREE'S A CROWD
(above) At nine, Anakin was generally considered too old to begin Jedi training.

JIDAIGEKI
(left) Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress* was a strong influence on George Lucas.

GREEN & MEAN
(below left) Yoda is menaced by the ghost of Darth Bane, one of the earliest Sith, in *The Clone Wars*.

FATHER FIBBERS

One of the few Jedi survivors in *A New Hope*, 'Ben' Kenobi showcases Jedi powers of persuasion and Kurosawa's powers of influence: the scene where he amputates a trouble-causer's limb (a Kenobi speciality) echoes a scene from Kurosawa's *Yojimbo*. Other seeded elements of Jedi lore in the first trilogy include Force spirits, trials, prophecies and big porkies – what Obi-Wan tells Luke about his dad is quite a whopper from most viewpoints. And we learn, perhaps, that the Force moves in mysterious ways: Qui-Gon's belief that Anakin was "the chosen one" may have been shaken by the boy's Vader-ification but Anakin does eventually lob Sidious down a hole, suggesting a restoration of balance in the Force. For a while.

SALE OF THE JEDI

After the deaths of Obi-Wan, Yoda and Anakin, Luke began fulfilling his promise to Yoda about passing on Jedi-deologies. In spin-off novels, the New Republic battle an alien race (the Yuuzhan Vong) while Luke trains a New Jedi Order. Among his students is Han and Leia's lad Jacen Solo, who goes rogue and becomes Darth Caedus.

Although these books were no longer considered 'canon' when Lucasfilm's sale to Disney birthed a new saga, traces linger. *The Force Awakens* introduces the Church of the Force, protectors of Jedi history. Luke opened a Jedi training school but went into hiding after trainee/nephew Ben Solo was drawn to the Dark Side by the mysterious Snoke: assuming the name Kylo Ren as a 'Knight of Ren', Ben channelled his late grandfather Anakin's anger-mismanagement influence, minus the bit about Vader's redemption.

Luke's conclusion to these events seems to be that the Jedi gig is up. After the trouble the Force has caused in the wrong gloved hands, he could be right – if not for two powerful influences. Scavenger-with-secrets Rey's untrained strengths open new avenues of potential in Force sensitivity. Factor in the powers of box-office temptation and one other thing raises doubts about Luke's perspective. Time for the Jedi to end? We'll see how that pans out.

THE 20 GREATEST JEDI MOMENTS

Mystical knights the Jedi guard peace and justice in the Star Wars universe. They also look kickass when wielding a lightsaber or blowing shit up. Total Film celebrates their finest moments. The Force is strong with these ones...

WORDS PAUL BRADSHAW, MATTHEW LOOKER, JAMES MOTTRAM, NEIL SMITH



[1] DEATH STAR KILLER

A New Hope

Learning from Han Solo that he's "all clear", Luke Skywalker uses the Force to fire his torpedoes into the Death Star's compromising exhaust port. It is indeed a "great shot", bringing an end to the Empire's deadliest killing machine.



[2] SARLACC PIT

Return Of The Jedi

Facing a fate worse than death in the belly of the sarlacc, Luke turns the tables on Jabba the Hutt with some help from Artoo and a well-concealed lightsaber. The Special Edition gave a beak to this voracious desert beastie.



[3] MAULING MAUL

The Phantom Menace

His master dead, his nemesis gloating and his grip slipping, Obi-Wan looks done for as he hangs over an abyss beneath Darth Maul. Pulling a classic Jedi switcheroo, he leaps over Maul's head, sucks in Qui-Gon's 'saber and bisects the Sith.

[4] YODA VS. DOOKU

Attack Of The Clones

After some initial parrying involving mind control and lightning bolts, Yoda and Count Dooku get down to business in *AOTC*'s standout sequence. ("It is obvious this contest cannot be decided by our knowledge of the Force, but by our skills with the lightsaber!") What a shame it's over so quickly though, Dooku using a mean trick to divert Yoda's attention and make his escape.





[5] REY LIGHTS UP

The Force Awakens

There's a moment in *Episode VII* when the Force actually 'awakens'. Played for chills, Rey magics over her lightsaber and switches it on for the first time, bathing the audience in blue light. Kylo pauses. John Williams swells. *Star Wars* is reborn.

GREATEST JEDI MOMENTS



[6] POD RACE

The Phantom Menace

Our first sight of Anakin Skywalker's abilities, the pod race – the Boonta Eve Classic – shows just how strong the Force was with this one. Reminiscent of *Return Of The Jedi*'s speeder bike chase, with its videogame aesthetic, this high-speed dash across the rocky Tatooine terrain hints at what an intuitive pilot Anakin will become. Winning the race (and his freedom from slaveowner Watto), Anakin writes his name into local legend, long before he'll take a much darker path.



[7] KILLING KENOBI

A New Hope

Four decades on, Obi-Wan's noble act of self-sacrifice still brings a lump to the throat, as does his powerfully eloquent valediction. ("You can't win Darth. If you strike me down I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine.")



[8] ANAKIN VS. ASAJJ

Clone Wars

Both impulsive Jedi and sinister Sith assassin are a Force to be reckoned with in this showdown. Frenetic duelling pauses only for heart-stopping tension as rain sizzles on humming lightsabers, before more intense combat ends with Anakin's unchecked rage emerging the victor.



[9] MACE WINDU VS. JANGO FETT

Attack Of The Clones

In the chaos of the Clone Wars' first battle, a moment of precision stands out. Purple lightsaber in hand, Mace Windu charges Jango Fett, severing the bounty hunter's arm before slicing his head clean off. Dooku does not look best pleased.



[10] TRAINING DAY

The Empire Strikes Back

Luke gets an object lesson in mind over matter when his X-wing subsides deeper into the Dagobah swamp. "We'll never get it out now!" he moans petulantly, only to get a rebuke from his wizened green mentor. "Always with you it cannot be done," sighs Yoda. "You must unlearn what you have learned!" Luke does his best to retrieve his spacecraft, but it is left to Yoda to show him the way. "I don't believe it!" gasps Skywalker. "That is why you fail," comes his teacher's damning response.



[12] FORCE GHOSTS

Return Of The Jedi

The original climax of *Jedi* saw Obi-Wan and Yoda joined by Sebastian Shaw's Anakin for the Ready Brek love-in. Watch the Special Edition on DVD now, though, and you'll see Hayden Christensen appear to give Luke his wordless blessing.





[13] AHSOKA VS. DARTH VADER

Rebels

Ahsoka confronts her former mentor in this emotional battle, fighting as much to avenge Anakin's 'death' as to make amends for previously abandoning him. The master versus apprentice duel mirrors Vader's later fight with Kenobi, but this time with Ezra Bridger watching helplessly.

[14] REY'S MIND GAMES

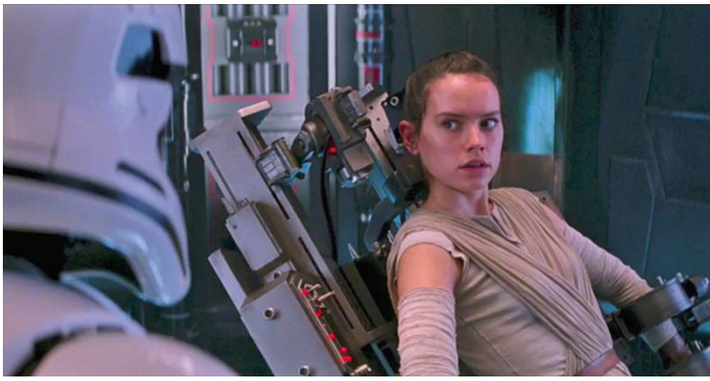
The Force Awakens

Initially resistant to Rey's (Daisy Ridley) commands ("Scavenger scum!"), the stormtrooper we now know to be Daniel Craig eventually relents, removes her restraints and casually discards his blaster. Asked later how he'd bagged the part, Craig joked he'd slept with J.J. Abrams.

[11] THREE-WAY DUEL

The Phantom Menace

The prequels came out of the gate footloose and fancy-free. Gone were the graceful old days of Errol Flynn-style sword waggling, replaced with hard, fast, balletic martial arts that raised the bar with a three-way, multi-part lightsaber standoff. Darth Maul barely looks like he's trying at first (he even throws a box around just to look cool), but the action picks up quickly as Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan attack Darth's double-bladed 'saber on both sides – all three Force pushing and pulling each other through a hall of lasers.





[15] THE BATTLE OF HOTH

The Empire Strikes Back

Tackling the behemoth AT-ATs during a snowy Empire ambush, Luke rallies his Rogue Squadron to protect Echo Base's power generator from complete destruction. As their snowspeeders' laser cannons prove no match for the walking weapons, more inspired tactics are called for: Wedge trips them up with tow cables while man-on-the-ground Luke Skywalker takes a more direct approach with a lightsaber and a thermal detonator.



[16] BEN'S BRAIN BENDER

A New Hope

Halted by a five-man stormtrooper patrol as they enter Mos Eisley, things look dodgy for Luke, Obi-Wan and their droid companions. Until, that is, Ben Kenobi uses mind control to throw the 'troopers off the scent. "You don't need to see his identification," he intones. "These aren't the droids you're looking for." "The Force can have a strong influence on the weak-minded," Ben explains afterwards.

[17] LUKE'S APPEARANCE

The Force Awakens

It takes more than two hours for Luke Skywalker to appear in *TFA*, and when he does, he doesn't say a word. Such is the shadow that Mark Hamill casts over the film, though, that his belated discovery on the oceanic planet of Ahch-To (really Skellig Michael off the coast of Ireland) carries an almost mythic charge. The idea was for Luke to arrive earlier but screenwriter Michael Arndt could never make it work. "Every time Luke entered the movie he just took it over," he explains.





[18] OBI-WAN VS. GENERAL GRIEVOUS

Revenge Of The Sith

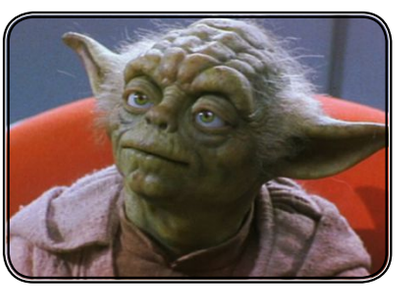
What's better than two lightsabers? Five, obviously. Giving the wheezy droid leader an extra pair of arms makes the Obi-Wan showdown look like three fights in one. It's a handful of bearded midi-chlorians versus a rolling robot fan of lightsaber blades.

[19] OBI-WAN'S ARM CHOP

A New Hope

Luke Skywalker is minding his own business in the Mos Eisley cantina when a customer with a face like a baboon's arse takes exception to his presence. "He doesn't like you," his compadre explains. Ben tries to make peace but the bullies aren't placated. Before they know it, one of them has lost a limb to Obi-Wan's lightsaber. Now that's how you disarm an assailant...





[20] JEDI COUNCIL

The Phantom Menace

In testing young Anakin's suitability as a potential Padawan, Yoda reveals a step-by-step guide for becoming a Sith: "Fear is the path to the Dark Side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." He wasn't wrong.

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DON FLOOD / AUGUST

she got game

From Doctor Who to Guardians Of The Galaxy, **KAREN GILLAN** is fast becoming Comic-Con royalty. Yet while she powers up for this month's retro-refit Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle, her real ambitions lie behind the camera. Total Film meets the sassy Scot who's going to the next level.

WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM
PORTRAIT DON FLOOD

You just can't miss Karen Gillan right now. Or ever, really. At 5ft 11in, with flowing red hair, milk-white skin and an infectious giggle, she's instantly recognisable. No wonder she wore a mask at this year's Dragon Con, the Atlanta-based fan convention that runs San Diego's Comic-Con close for popularity. Check out her Instagram, and this not-so-wee Scottish lass posted a photo of her and fellow *Doctor Who* alumni Matt Smith and Arthur Darvill, all sporting weird get-ups.

"There's this party that happens at nighttime where all of the fans in their costumes take over this building," she explains, excitedly. "We were like, 'We want to go right into the eye of the storm, but we can't walk around… it would be fun but too intense. So we decided to get some weird gimp-looking masks! I don't know where they came from. And I don't want to know." There goes that giggle. "But we put them on with some hats and walked around and it was so much fun. Nobody recognised us."

It was lucky that it didn't fall off by accident. "Can you imagine?" she chortles. "Is that Karen Gillan? Why is she wearing a gimp mask?" It's not exactly the sort of thing you want splashed across the tabloids. But then the 29-year-old actress is quite right; there is simply no way she can walk the floor of a fan convention anymore. From Amy Pond in *Doctor Who* to the blue-skinned Nebula in *Guardians Of The Galaxy* (who, like everyone who's anyone in the Marvel universe, is shaping up for *Avengers: Infinity War*), that's some rabid fanbases right there.

What's more, it's only going to escalate. "As my character in *Guardians Of The Galaxy* grows, I can see the fanbase for her growing as well, which is pretty satisfying," she says. "*Doctor Who*, though, is a real staple. In America, it has such a cult following, still. People are still discovering it."

While we're on the subject – what are Gillan's thoughts on Jodie Whittaker imminently becoming the show's first female Doctor? "I've been waiting for this moment when a woman gets the role and it's finally happened," she says, lighting up. "I just know she's going to be amazing."

While Whittaker is playing the Time Lord (Lady?), Gillan will be adding to her Comic-Con cred in this winter's *Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle*, alongside the all-star cast of Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black and Kevin Hart, reimagining the 1995 Robin Williams original about a magic boardgame. "I love the original so much, it's in my top three films of all time," says Gillan, quite earnestly. "When I had an audition for it, I couldn't understand it. I was like, 'What? What are the chances of this?' Then it was, 'What are they going to do with it?' I was immediately protective over it."

new tricks

Although there was a short-lived television series and even a tie-in videogame, this is the first time studio backer Sony has ventured back towards a second *Jumanji* movie (discounting 'spiritual sequel' *Zathura*). Directed by Jake Kasdan (*Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*), the party line is this is more 'continuation' than remake.

"It's definitely evolved," nods Gillan. "It has its own identity. The film doesn't feel as much like a reboot as like a new take on it… it hasn't stuck exactly to the formula of the first film. We're in the game rather than the game coming into the real world."

What's more, *Jumanji* has gone all digital on us. No more dice rolling; this time, four teenagers discover an aged games console that sucks them into the game's jungle setting and morphs the quartet into the adult 'characters' of their choosing. The humour is immediately apparent, given the disparity between adolescent and avatar. "We all have our special skills, and we're trying to learn how to use them," says Gillan. "But we're also four dysfunctional teenagers who can't get along with each other."

Gillan's in-game character is Ruby Roundhouse, "a killer of men" who is proficient in every single martial art. The actress starts chuckling again. "I don't know why I'm laughing but it's funny," she says, presumably tickled at the thought of becoming a badass on such a grand scale. "It's kinda fun because the character is this really nerdy girl who doesn't think she's very badass at all, and then she gets trapped in the body of this killer of men. So that was what was the most fun for me, trying to navigate this avatar."







While it would be easy for Gillan to simply bask in Hollywood success, the actress has also just wrapped her first feature as writer-director, *The Party's Just Beginning*. Set in Gillan's home town of Inverness, in the Scottish Highlands, she plays Lucy, a young woman dealing with the suicide of her best friend. "It just dives into the aftermath of suicide and what it's like for the person closest to be left. She's suffering all of the stages of grief, blaming herself, guilt and shame… so she's quite self-destructive throughout the film. It's about her trying to overcome that."

It should be noted that Gillan hasn't dealt with the subject first-hand. "It came from a statistic where the suicide



rate was higher among men in the Highlands than anywhere else in Scotland, and I was like, 'Why?'" she says. "I think it's been voted the most idyllic place to live in the UK. It's beautiful! And it's such a lovely place to grow up, so I just started to wonder why that was. That led to me writing the script."

Curiously, it was an experience that brought her full circle, not just back to Inverness but to her childhood, when she was raised an only child by her mother Marie and her father Raymond. "The first time I ever got into acting was when I got a video camera, and I started writing and directing little horror films around my house, where I would end up killing my dad in them! We would get tomato sauce and use it for blood. And so I've actually been doing this since I was a kid. I just never thought of directing as a real job… I don't know why."

As a youngster, Gillan's initial passion was neither directing nor acting but music. "That was my first thing. I played the piano from when I was seven, and my dad's a massive music fan, so I was always subjected to Ella Fitzgerald and Nina Simone and Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra, people like that. That was my first love."

It was in her teens that she veered towards performance, studying her craft in Edinburgh at 16, then onto the Italia Conti stage school two years later.

During this time, she snagged her first screen role – an episode of detective drama *Rebus*. Following that with a two-year stint on *The Kevin Bishop Show*, honing her comedy skills and even impersonating the likes of Katy Perry and Angelina Jolie, she then hit the mother lode in 2009, cast as the Doctor's on-screen companion, Amy Pond. Films soon followed – everything from creepy horror *Oculus* to finance drama *The Big Short*.



STAR-STRUCK
Gillan as Nebula (above and below) in *Guardians 2*.

GAME THEORY
With *Jumanji* co-stars Jack Black, Kevin Hart and Dwayne Johnson (top left), plus Nick Jonas (centre left).

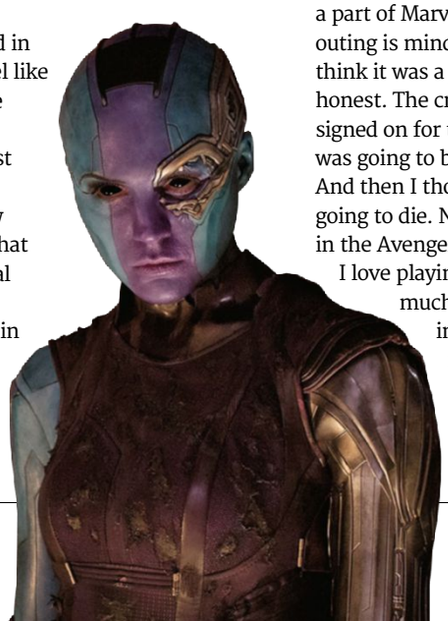
TIME TRAVELS
As *Doctor Who* companion Amy Pond (below left), with on-screen hubbie Rory (Arthur Darvill) and the good Doctor (Matt Smith).

director's cut

After wrapping *The Party's Just Beginning*, however, Gillan is clearly plotting a future course towards further behind-camera storytelling. Could she see herself following *Wonder Woman*'s Patty Jenkins in a few years and tackling a superhero movie?

"Definitely!" she cries. "That's something I would be interested in doing and would like to do. I feel like I've gathered a lot of knowledge in that genre. I've acted in a lot of things of that nature. And just being in the environment, you pick up so much, so I know how it works. I would love to apply that to directing. That would be a real goal of mine eventually."

For the moment, she's back in school – the biggest superhero school ever assembled that is – shooting *Avengers: Infinity War*, due in 2018, and its still-untitled second part.



"We've been doing it since January and we go until January… this is the longest shoot!" she says. "But it's amazing. It's going to be epic. It's going to be a cinematic event, rather than just a film." Having already reprised Nebula this year for James Gunn's $863m-grossing *Guardians* sequel, Gillan is now joining the Marvel A-team, with the *Guardians* crew teaming up with the Avengers in the battle against mega-villain Thanos.

Seeing Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson et al suit up as the world's most famous superheroes, did her inner geek freak? "It doesn't get old!" she grins. "When they're all fully in costume, sitting around with their coffees, I'm like, 'No! I cannot deal with this!' It's the most surreal thing ever. Then they will be talking about their costumes in a real practical way: 'The first suit is always tricky, because you're ironing out all the parts that don't feel comfortable…' Giving advice to other superheroes… it was very funny."

'It's fun because the character is this nerdy girl who doesn't think she's very badass at all, and then she gets trapped in the body of this killer of men'

For Gillan, the prospect of being a part of Marvel's biggest cinematic outing is mind-blowing. "I didn't think it was a plausible thing, to be honest. The crazy thing is when I first signed on for the role, I thought it was going to be eight days of filming. And then I thought the character was going to die. Now five years later I'm in the Avengers! Woah! It's amazing. I love playing this character so much… I'm so invested in her, I want to see it through to the end."

JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE OPENS ON 20 DECEMBER.





MY LIFE IN PICTURES

AARON SORKIN

He personalised the technical revolution with Steve Jobs and The Social Network, he reinvented TV with The West Wing, and he courted greatness with his very first screenplay, A Few Good Men. And now he's aced his directorial debut with underground poker thriller **MOLLY'S GAME**. Aaron Sorkin talks Total Film through his illustrious career...

WORDS JORDAN FARLEY



CAMERA PRESS / BARRY MARDEN

FILMOGRAPHY

MOLLY'S GAME 2017



I read the book, which I enjoyed a lot, but it wasn't until I met [*the real*] Molly Bloom… We spent a long time talking. I knew that there was a story here about a very unusual movie heroine, and that it was more emotional than it appeared on the surface.

I was not at all familiar with the poker underworld. It was a complete education. But what really got to me the most was when I met Molly and I saw how big a difference there was between what I'll call the real story and what's in the book or what had been reported online – the difference between this person that had been invented by the tabloids and the real thing.

I didn't start writing *Molly's Game* with the intention of directing it. After I turned in the first draft, I sat down for meetings with Amy Pascal and Mark Gordon, two of our three producers, to discuss the director. We had a list of five upstanding directors, and we went through that list, name by name, pros and cons. And when we got to the end, I was surprised when the two of them turned to me and said, "But we think *you* should direct it." I spoke to friends, directors I respect, writers who had become writer-directors who I respect. They were supportive.

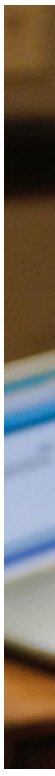
There was a gravitational pull with this movie. I wanted it to be about a shiny object – to see the glamour and the money and decadence and the sex and the drugs and the poker and the poker and the poker – but I was also seeing a more emotional story, a bigger story, a *better* story. And I wanted to protect that.



STEVE JOBS 2015

I read Walter Isaacson's fantastic book [Steve Jobs] and I went out and I met with dozens and dozens of people, including the real-life counterparts of the characters who were in the movie. Obviously not Steve – he had passed away by the time I started doing the movie. And then I spent about six to nine months just pacing around, climbing the walls, trying to figure out what to do because all I knew was what I didn't want to do, which was a biopic, that kind of cradle-to-grave structure and in between you do the greatest hits of the character.

So I came up with the structure to have three scenes that all took place in real time – all of these conflicts would play out over those three scenes, before one of his big product launches. I liked the first one because it was the introduction of the Mac. The second one was Steve in exile. And then I wanted to do one that marked his return to Apple. So those were the three: Mac, NeXT and the iMac. The products themselves weren't that interesting to me. It was the events that surrounded them.



REX

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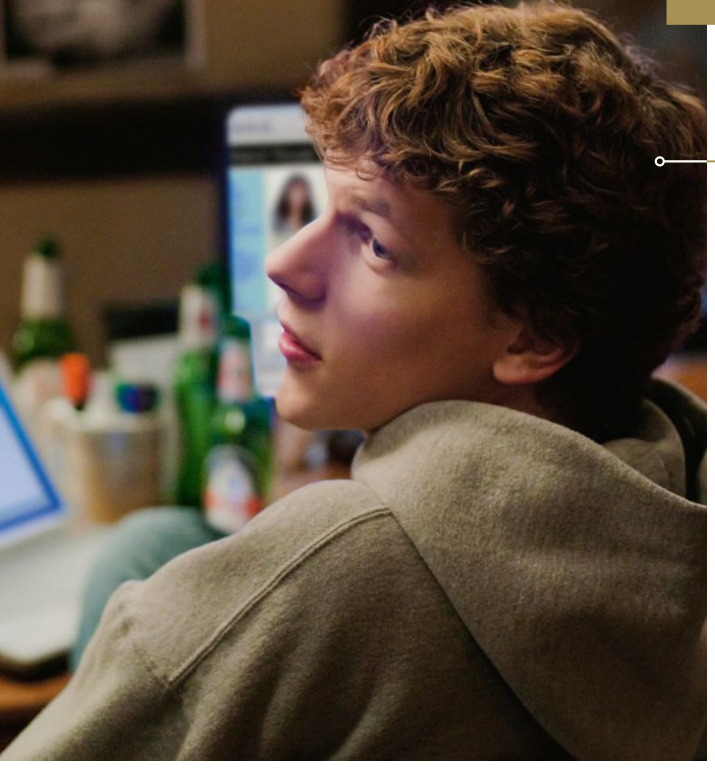
MONEYBALL 2011

I was more of a gun for hire on *Moneyball*. Initially, I was supposed to work on the movie for about two weeks. That turned into a little over a year, so I feel no less of an attachment to it than anything else.

It was not easy to explain sabermetrics [*analysis of baseball statistics that measure in-game activity*] on screen. But it was a lot harder to make someone care about it, to make it emotional. So I decided instead to tell the story of Billy Beane [*played by Brad Pitt*], who was interesting to me because here was a guy who was, at 17, a winner. His life was set. He was going to be a number one draft pick for the New York Mets in Major League baseball. He could have a baseball scholarship, or go to college on a football scholarship – Stanford wanted him to play quarterback.

But sometimes scouts get it wrong, and it turned out Billy Beane couldn't play Major League baseball. He's in his forties now. He's a fierce competitor. He's a winner who's been doing nothing but losing since he was 17 years old. *That's* the story. There's a connection with Molly [*in* Molly's Game] in that, at the beginning of the movie, she tells us exactly what she's going to do with her life – she's going to Harvard Law School; there's an Olympic medal around her neck; and she's starting a foundation. She's a winner right up until the moment that she trips over a stick. It literally sends her off course for over a decade.





THE SOCIAL NETWORK 2010

Writing *The Social Network* was a little tricky because a number of the people – Eduardo Saverin, and Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss – had these huge monetary settlements from Facebook. They came with a gag order.

Incredibly, the Bay Area law firm representing the Winklevoss twins… In their annual letter that goes out to all their clients in which they get to kind of boast about all the great things that the law firm had done that year, they published what the settlement was that they got for Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss, in violation of the agreement that they'd made. Which was bad for them, but it did allow Cameron and Tyler to talk to me!

Eduardo Saverin, on the other hand, it was like he had disappeared off the face of the Earth. There was no chance he was ever going to talk. There was too much money at stake. On the Friday that the movie opened, that morning, we got a phone call saying, "It's Eduardo Saverin, and I would love to see the movie." That afternoon, we put him in a private screening room at Sony in New York. I met him as soon as that screening was over, and we talked for a few minutes. And that was my only contact with Eduardo.

People remember the opening scene of the movie. It took me many, many, many months of research to first know what I was going to write about, and then, more particularly, have a sense of what that opening scene was going to be. But once I knew what it was going to be, it took me as long to write it as it took to type.

FILMOGRAPHY

THE WEST WING 1999-2006



My agent said, "Would you have lunch with John Wells?" John is a very successful producer with very good taste. He had done *ER*. The night before that lunch, I had friends over for dinner, one of whom was [*screenwriter*] Akiva Goldsman. Akiva and I snuck off to the basement office to sneak a cigarette, and he looked at the *American President* poster on the wall. He said, "Do you know what would make a good TV show? That. Forget about the relationship between the president and the lobbyist. Focus on the stories of the senior staffers." I said, "That's a terrible idea. Besides, I'm not going to be doing a television show."

The next day, I went to this lunch, and it became clear to me that this wasn't just a "getting to know you" lunch because John Wells had brought with him executives from Warner Bros and agents from CAA, his agency. I sat down, and John said, "So what do you want to do?" Instead of saying, "I think there's been a misunderstanding," I said, "I want to do a show about senior staffers at the White House." They said, "OK, you've got a deal." All of a sudden, I was committed to write the pilot to *The West Wing*. I wasn't even thinking that this was going to get on the air and that I was going to then write 88 episodes after that.

Up until *The West Wing*, broadcast television was about alienating as few people as possible. So the characters of television shows didn't have a particular religion, didn't have a particular income. Well, here was a show in which people were identifying as Democrats and Republicans. The characters had a political opinion, which is the conflict on the show – the tension and obstacle that you need to have drama with ideas.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT 1995



It takes me a long time to write everything. Short, for me, is a year. You have to sort of load up the shelves with groceries. You have to know what the intention and obstacle is in each scene. What does this person want? What's standing in their way of getting it? And then when you're fully loaded, you want to write with as much speed and energy as you can. I really believe that that energy makes its way onto the page.

It took me a while to write *The American President*. When I finally turned in the first draft, it was 345 pages long. That's one of the reasons why it took a long time! But in those 345 pages, one of the stories in it I was telling was about this romance between the president and a lobbyist. Rob Reiner said, "Why don't you focus on that story?" And that's how it got into shape.

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MALICE 1993

A writer named Jonas McCord pitched an idea to Castle Rock based on a rumour that he'd heard in Beverly Hills. That rumour was that a surgeon and a young woman had conspired to defraud a medical malpractice insurance company. He operated on her and screwed up on purpose in some sort of non-life-threatening way. She sued for $40m, and they split the money.

Whether that's true or not, it was the beginning of an interesting thriller. So Castle Rock hired Jonas McCord. And I don't know why, but they were not satisfied with what he'd done. They went to Bill Goldman, who had just done a couple of movies for Castle Rock – *Misery*, *The Princess Bride* – and they said, "Do you want to take a crack at writing it?" He said, "I don't have time to do it, but why don't you go out and identify some new young writer" – in other words, cheap – "and I will guide that person through the process." I was the writer that was identified.

I'd do it differently now. It still remains a terrific idea for a thriller, but every once in a while, talented people get together and miss the ball.





A FEW GOOD MEN 1992

A Few Good Men was a great experience, a heady experience.

When I came to New York after college to pursue my dream of being a starving writer, I had, like everybody else, a whole bunch of survival jobs. Primarily, I was a bartender at a Broadway theatre. You're not doing anything during the first act of the play. You serve people during the walk-in and then you serve people again at intermission. So during the first act of *La Cage Aux Folles* I was writing *A Few Good Men* on cocktail napkins. I'd go home with my pockets stuffed, and I'd spill them out onto the desk, in the one-bedroom apartment I shared with two other people. I would begin typing up the cocktail napkins, and that was my first automatic rewrite. It was there that I discovered that I like rewriting more than I like writing.

I'm surprised [*how famous*] the "You can't handle the truth" line is. It certainly didn't occur to me at two in the morning when I was writing that piece that that line would have as long a life as it's had. But I suspect that a lot of that has to do with Jack Nicholson.

MOLLY'S GAME OPENS ON 26 DECEMBER.



MONSTER

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SQUAD

Elves and orcs alongside Will Smith's cop in crime-riddled Los Angeles? David Ayer's **Bright** is as genre-busting as they come. But the real story might just be how this Netflix action-fantasy could change blockbusters forever. Total Film interrogates Ayer and his big-gun cast...

WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM

Fairy dust is usually sprinkled in enchanted woods. Orcs and elves dwell in caves and forests. They certainly don't belong in downtown LA. Until now, that is. Netflix-backed, David Ayer's new movie *Bright* is all about re-writing the rule book – for fantasy, for urban thrillers and, crucially, for blockbuster business models. "It's this crazy mash-up of the grit and the hard rated-R grind of *Training Day*, but then smashed with *Lord Of The Rings*," explains star Will Smith, who is joined by his director Ayer (the pair previously teamed on *Suicide Squad*) and co-stars Joel Edgerton, Noomi Rapace, Edgar Ramírez and Lucy Fry in San Diego's Hilton Bayfront Hotel. It's all grins and guffaws following their triumphant footage presentation in Comic-Con's famous Hall H. "It's this really spectacular world," grins Smith.

Spectacular doesn't even begin to cover it, as fantastical species live among humans in a South Central LA you might recognise from Ayer's 2006 directorial debut *Harsh Times* – drive-bys and shootouts, gangbangers and cops. Here, the elves and orcs are not battling at Helm's Deep but instead fighting prejudice and discrimination. This new world order has "a lot of cracks", says Edgerton. "The tectonic plates haven't quite worked themselves out. There's a lot of racism."

With the actor hidden behind three hours' worth of blue facial prosthetics, Edgerton's character, Nick Jakoby, is the first orc to be admitted into the LAPD under a new diversity programme, partnering up with Smith's less-than-pleased-about-it cop, Daryl Ward. But the petty divisions between these two





are nothing compared to the wider picture sketched out by screenwriter Max Landis (*Chronicle*), where even within the ranks of orcs and elves, there are hierarchies. "The elves are like the people who rule Beverly Hills," notes Edgerton. "The elves are like the one-percenters… very well-dressed [*and*] aspirational."

With the humans described by Ayer as "middle-management", the orcs are the blue-collar workers. "They're the guys that dig ditches and build your houses and build your roads. But they don't really get any respect, and they get their ass kicked by the cops all the time." Dealing with class, economic and racial divisions, *Bright*'s most obvious antecedents are the *Alien Nation* (where extraterrestrials are in the LAPD) film and TV show, along with Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (alien segregation in South Africa).

MAGIC TOUCH

Rather like J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* universe, the Ayer-Landis world has its own rules and regulations. A 'Bright' is a magic-user, though these powers are reserved for the otherworldly creatures in the story. "If a human were to touch a magic wand, they would just obliterate themselves," says Smith. "You have to be trained in magic to actually handle a wand." The key to it all is Tikka (Australian-born Fry) – a "baby Bright", as Smith dubs her, this young elf is still undergoing her training when she comes into possession of an ancient spell-caster. "When Ward and Jakoby find the wand that Tikka has," says Fry, "that's when everything unravels."

Also seeking this relic is an elf named Leilah (Rapace), who is a full-on 'Bright' and as powerful as they come. But according to the Swedish star, nothing is "black and white" in a world where good and evil are very fluid. "I'm the villain,



ALIEN NATION
Joel Edgerton plays an orc cop (top), partnered with Will Smith's human (above); Happy Anderson and Edgar Ramírez (above left) play FBI agents; Noomi Rapace (below) as elvish villain Leilah.



and I think you could say that my actions are very cruel and violent," she says. "But in my head and my heart, I'm doing something good. I want to create a better space, a better world." Others, such as Ramírez's Kandomere, an elf working for the FBI's magic division, are similarly shaded in grey.

One thing that puts the elves above all others are their superior senses. "It's like they have six senses, and are wide awake at the same time," says Rapace. "They take in everything… so it's hard to escape and hide from them." According to Fry, during rehearsals, Ayer explained exactly what it was like to be an elf in this world. "He said, 'It's kind of like you're in a different state of mind. You're in a different realm to everyone else.' They see through things and into things… things that people can't normally see."

As for orcs, they too can intuitively sense if humans are lying. "I might not understand it in your inflection, but I'll smell it on you," says Edgerton. "That's what makes me qualified to be a cop." Interestingly, his character wants to fit in with his Homo sapiens employers, not emphasise his differences. "He's spent his whole life going to a human school. He cut his teeth so that he could look more human. And he was studying what it was like to be a human being." Rather than play a beast, the Australian wound up "desperately trying to be the most conservative human being that I can be".

After the villain-led DC *Suicide Squad* gave Ayer a bigger, VFX-drenched canvas to play on, *Bright* takes it one reality-fused step further. This is not a gloomy Gotham but the LA that Ayer has made his own, be it in his scripts for corrupt cop dramas *Training Day* and *Dark Blue* or directorial projects like *Street Kings* and *End Of Watch*, his visceral 2012 doc-like look at two cops on patrol in the city's most dangerous 'hoods. "He knows that world very well," says the Venezuelan-born Ramírez, who reports that Ayer would direct him in flawless Spanish.

If this offered further proof of how immersed Ayer is in local Hispanic culture, it's clearly been hugely influential on him. "Every filmmaker needs a compass," he nods. "I grew up in south LA. I saw violence on both sides. I mean, I've lived with it. It's still out there. Children are still being beaten. We only have one heart. How do you live in this world with two hearts, where on one side you belong with the group that you belong to, and [*yet*] you want to join society? How do you change your heart

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to join a society that doesn't want you to join? I see all of these things."

Gentrification has also struck since Ayer last shot there six years ago. "The city has changed so much. It's absolutely transformed. You take the warehouse district downtown, which used to be where you could shoot and do machine guns and what have you – it's now a very high-end arts loft district. Skid Row is developing. Even the classic south LA neighbourhoods have evolved, because there's been so much investment and so much development. So the old LA is really disappearing. They were pulling things down around our location. We were like, 'OK, let's shoot this scene before that building is gone.'"

THE NEW DAWN

If the LA landscape is changing, then that most certainly includes Hollywood. The biggest story behind *Bright* comes at boardroom level. Netflix reportedly paid $90m, outbidding a Warner Bros/MGM team-up – a further triumph in what has been a game-changing year for the streaming giant. Critical acclaim for its Cannes entries – Bong Joon-ho's creature feature *Okja* and Noah Baumbach's *The Meyerowitz Stories* – is one thing. Snagging a complex, CG-action blockbuster with franchise potential is quite another. This is playing the studios at their own game.

For Ayer, working with Netflix at the dawn of a new entertainment era was simply a no-brainer. "I got to make it in a way and at a level that otherwise I may not have been able to make," he says. "This was shot on ALEXA 65, which is a state-of-the-art large-format camera. I mean, they're shooting the new *Star Wars* [*movies*] with these cameras." Purists will be pleased to know Ayer also shot with "old-school" CinemaScope lenses, the sort used to film *Lawrence Of Arabia*. "For me, the only real difference [*working for Netflix*] is just that there's a lot more freedom and creativity."

There were other plus-points, such as shooting on authentic locations, which lent the film some serious verisimilitude. "We weren't chasing a [*financial*] rebate. We weren't shooting Atlanta for Los Angeles," says Ayer, who compares the working environment to an independent movie from 20 years back. "It felt like I was making my first film, *Harsh Times*," he adds. Then there is the level of violence, with Netflix allowing for a more adult approach.



DEADSHOT
Smith's Daryl Ward on the job in South Central LA (above); Lucy Fry (below) as young elf Tikka, who chances across a powerful wand.

"The rating probably would have been different, for sure," says producer Eric Newman. "This is a rated-R movie. It wouldn't have been at a studio."

Smith, who marks his first Netflix movie with *Bright*, concurs. "I think what the major difference is that the Netflix business model is different, because it's subscription based," he nods. "Their risk profile is different. So Netflix can make a hard rated-R film for $170m, right? The studios can't do that, if the executive wants to be at work on Monday. If you make a movie that's expensive, you have to broaden the audience, which means you have to be PG-13, right? It is a huge decision when you make a film of that magnitude based on the risk profile."

The question remains, what could *Bright* mean if it hits big? More blockbusters heading to Netflix and other streaming services like Amazon and the US-based Hulu? The end of the summer tentpole or – even more seismic – the studio system as we know it? Perhaps nothing quite so dramatic, but the times are definitely a-changing. "It's really interesting to be at the forefront of whatever this new way of consuming entertainment is going to be," says Smith, who nonetheless points out that his own Netflix-savvy kids still see movies in cinemas. "I don't know how it's going to play out, but I'm really excited to see how it goes." The future looks, well, bright.

BRIGHT STREAMS ON NETFLIX FROM 22 DECEMBER.

WORDS JORDAN FARLEY PORTRAITS ERIC RAY DAVIDSON

> I DON'T WANT TO EXIST IN A SPACE WHERE I'M LIKED BY EVERYONE OR I'M CONTENT ALL THE TIME, BECAUSE THEN I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M LIVING.
>
> **JAKE GYLLENHAAL**

From troubled teen in breakout Donnie Darko to sociopath Lou Bloom in Nightcrawler, Jake Gyllenhaal has never been afraid to push himself. Embarking on the next phase of his career with Boston Marathon bombing drama Stronger, Total Film finds a once-in-a-generation actor who's starting to take life a little less seriously.

ERIC RAY DAVIDSON / TRUNK ARCHIVE

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"This was the most challenging role I've ever played," says Jake Gyllenhaal of his performance as Boston Marathon bombing survivor Jeff Bauman in *Stronger*. "Physically, definitely. Emotionally? I think so, as well." It's a bold claim for an actor hot off the most emotionally demanding chapter of his career. But in the case of Bauman, who lost both legs above the knee as a result of the 2013 terrorist attack, the weight of tragedy is offset by the character's disarming sense of humour, and the latter is also true of Gyllenhaal today.

In town for the London Film Festival, Gyllenhaal is holed up in The Langham Hotel for a day of press duties ahead of *Stronger*'s UK premiere. Looking movie-star suave in a charcoal grey suit, the 36-year-old is at once animated and relaxed, his long, swept-back hair reconfiguring in ever-more messy ways with each sweep of the hand while those oceanic blue eyes remain locked on tractor beam. Contrary to the expectations that come with meeting an actor who goes to painstaking lengths for physically transformative roles, Gyllenhaal never comes across as precious or pretentious, instead balancing an eloquent respect for his profession with reflective, often self-deprecating charm. He insists early on, for instance, that he will make our hour-long chat "fucking worthwhile".

This, undoubtedly, comes from his upbringing. Born into a family of filmmakers – his mother a screenwriter, his father a director, and his sister Maggie an actress with a career to rival her baby brother's – Gyllenhaal started young, starring as Billy Crystal's kid in *City Slickers* at just 11 and clocking up half a dozen screen appearances before breaking out with *Donnie Darko* in 2001. In the years since, Gyllenhaal has cultivated one of Hollywood's most eclectic careers, dabbling with blockbusters (*The Day After Tomorrow*, *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time*) but favouring intense, soul-searching dramas (*Jarhead*, *Zodiac*, *Source Code*, *End Of Watch*, *Enemy*, *Prisoners*, *Nocturnal Animals*, *Southpaw*, to name just some). He has, rather ridiculously, only one Oscar nomination to date – for his performance as heartbroken cowboy Jack Twist in *Brokeback Mountain*.

A passionate advocate of film, Gyllenhaal is now moving into producing 'esoteric indies' with New York-based production company Nine Stories (named for J.D. Salinger's collection of short stories), which he founded with Riva Marker in 2015. Paul Dano's directorial debut *Wildlife* arrives later this year, but first up is *Stronger*, made all the more interesting because biopics are a rarity on Gyllenhaal's formidable CV.

Given the actor's reputation for unstinting commitment, it should come as no surprise to learn that he followed Bauman around for almost a year to ensure that he accurately captured every aspect of his subject's physicality and psychology. But far from being another gruelling role to add to a growing list of dark and disturbing dramas, *Stronger* sees Gyllenhaal tap into his rarely exploited talent for full-hearted, deadpan humour. And not only that, it's turned his entire approach to acting on its head.

"Stories have changed my life – you're participating in something that has a real effect," he says. "Which is why I take the beginning process very seriously. But that's been shattered by [*playing*] Jeff now. There's literally nothing for me to take seriously anymore…"



NOT KIDDING AROUND
Gyllenhaal as an under-pressure cop opposite Hugh Jackman's desperate dad in *Prisoners*.

Where were you when you first heard about the Boston Marathon bombing?
I was in New York. I remember seeing the images with feelings of confusion and anger and sadness and fear, particularly the image of Jeff. The universe is an extraordinary place; I had no idea our lives would cross. And boy, have they. About two years after, I got this screenplay. I had a pre-conceived notion of what I thought it would be, but on page three I was laughing. Throughout it, I was so moved. It wasn't about that photograph. It wasn't about that event. It was about a human being struggling through insurmountable odds to get to a place where they live again. I felt like that was a universal story, and worth being part of.

It's the first film made under your production company, Nine Stories. Why go all-in creatively?
I had an acting teacher who died two years ago who was an extraordinary human, and she said to me, "The target draws forth the arrow." And, in this case, it was just that. So I wanted to play the role because I was very moved by it. And then, as the circuitous route of making movies goes, the only way in which we could get it made was this newly formed production company that I had, alongside Bold Films, who financed *Nightcrawler* and *Whiplash* and *Drive*. So then it became an all-out effort of almost literally no sleep for the next two years! These are stories that I love to do, and I want to be able to produce. And we also have films that I will not be in, because I love filmmaking, and championing filmmakers.

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ROAD TO RECOVERY
Gyllenhaal as real-life Boston Marathon bombing survivor Jeff Bauman in *Stronger*.

When it comes to playing real people, where do you draw the line between accuracy and artistic interpretation?
There are some moments that you have to take artistic license with, only because it is two hours and you can't fit everything into it. But I would say our goal was always authenticity, and an honesty about the messiness of Jeff and his family, and the complexities of who he was as a human being *before* the event. And then this event that shook him up, but also gave his life meaning. He says it himself, he would have been totally satisfied just living at home with his mum and working at Costco for the rest of his life.

How did you achieve that authenticity?
Tatiana [*Maslany*] and I spent a really long time with Jeff and [*girlfriend*] Erin [*Hurley*], trying to understand them. All of those things really happened. Patty [*Jeff's mother*] doesn't believe her apartment was as dirty as it is in the movie; in fact, she was really upset about that! But we're telling a story about Jeff.

> **I AM VERY, VERY PARTICULAR, VERY SERIOUS ABOUT MY APPROACH**

What does Bauman think of the film?
It gave him a mirror, and I think it's been therapeutic to him. I don't know if I realised that I was making the movie for him. This movie has become something outside of a movie for all of us. It's an extraordinary experience of something else. I didn't know that I was going to be really good friends with Jeff and, sure enough, we are. It's a very interesting feeling to care deeply about the real person that you're playing. I have felt that [*previously*], but I haven't felt it like this. I haven't felt that same type of responsibility [*before*], because I just love the guy.

You say you haven't felt that type of responsibility, but you're an actor known for meticulous preparation…
When you're creating a character you have to approach it with the utmost pretension, [*laughs*] and you have to believe that it's the most important thing. Which has a level of absurdity to it because, essentially, you're pretending. But I also believe that storytelling is so important and can be life-changing – not only for the people making it, but as an audience member. So I am very, very particular, and very serious about my approach. But playing someone as real as Jeff is, who has a bullshit-meter beyond anyone I know, there was this moment where… I met my own fraudulence. It demanded of me a vulnerability that I was hiding behind my seriousness. All of that was a continuous process. And in that process, I realised that's what Jeff was up against, too. It was like, "Grow up, grow up, grow up," for both of us. So this movie has been a very interesting journey for me.

You've been drawn to dark, emotionally demanding roles in recent years. What was it about *Nightcrawler*, *Nocturnal Animals* and the like that appealed?
The material asks a certain thing of you, and then you see if you can meet it. In terms of Lou Bloom, it was this extraordinary screenplay with this extraordinary dialogue that I still miss. I met with Dan [*Gilroy*] a week ago in LA, because we're going to do another film together, and the conversation was, "How do I fit myself into this character you created?" With Lou Bloom there were

explorations of masculinity – what is it like to be able to control a situation with your mind and not your body; to have power, in a very dark way, over a situation? And also, to not care. There is a sociopathy to Lou Bloom that was fascinating to me. And then with Tom [*Ford*], it was leading with your heart, and 'what happens if you take that fight away', which I kind of hated. I am – fortunately or unfortunately – sensitive, so Tom wanted that piece of me, but he wanted that piece of me without my fight, without the ability to attack. That was a different process for me. I was fascinated with why I hated having my hands tied behind my back. I don't know if I was attracted to the darkness of them, but I was attracted to those explorations.

Do you find it hard to leave characters that you've played behind?

They all stay with you, like experiences we all have in our life that affect you, or shape you. But some do stay with me more than others. There are qualities of them that I find either were in me already and I just brought out, or I cultivated them through practice; strange things I'll do with my body or my voice that freak me out sometimes. So it does become part of you. Jeff will never go away. I think that's probably what makes us as close as we are, because we both had a responsibility: for him to be honest enough to tell me the things that I needed; and then the responsibility I felt to him. I'll admit there were times when maybe I pushed it emotionally pretty far. I don't know about too far, but there were a couple of nights that were sleepless as a result of this movie.

You were just 11 when you starred as Billy Crystal's son in *City Slickers*. What are your memories of those early years?

It's a role that really stayed with me. [*laughs*] I mean, to have watched Bruno Kirby and Daniel Stern and Billy Crystal when I was a little kid is just incredible. You learn so much from all of those people. Ron Underwood directed that movie. I still remember his really loving sensitivity to me as a kid, he was so supportive. That cow in the back of a van at LAX when I was 11, those are the things you don't forget. The honour of it is not lost on me, ever. And though there are times I definitely take it for granted, most of the time I give everything to my work because I know it's a particular honour, and there are many people who are more talented than me, so I've just got to hold on for dear life.

But you're regarded as one of the finest actors of your generation…

To be honest, I don't really feel like an actor. Which is strange. But I don't. I'm fluent in the process of filmmaking, of being on a set. I'm comfortable there, which already makes me a bit disturbed. But that comes from starting at a young age. And the illusion of that process was shattered very early, and it quickly became very hard work. It's a long, interesting journey to evolve into an adult doing it. Sometimes I worry about kids performing at a young age. It's a process that involves a lot of illusion.

Donnie Darko was your breakout role. Did its cult following, especially in the UK, take you by surprise?

Yes, thank God for the UK and *Donnie Darko*! But the answer to that question is: not entirely. I found that script to be so powerful, and the voice so original. It really spoke to me as an adolescent. So, I thought, maybe it can hook into the unconscious of the world and people's minds. And I remember being really bummed out when people in the States didn't get it, and thinking, "Maybe I'm just wrong." Then I was doing this show in the West End here, and I started to do press for it. Journalists would walk in the room and they'd be like [*wide-eyed*] "Hey!" And I'd be like, [*perplexed*] "Hi…" It was this incredible response, like you had done magic in front of somebody. The fact it's this strange rite of passage for people – it was for me, so I understand – is incredible. It's the only movie my sister [*Maggie*] and I have done together, so it's even more special to me.

> **I WAS REALLY BUMMED OUT THAT PEOPLE DIDN'T GET DONNIE DARKO**

Your first blockbuster, *The Day After Tomorrow*, followed shortly after. How much of a learning experience was it?

That was basically where you realise the star of that type of film is the effects. You are an actor for hire in that space, but with a director in Roland [*Emmerich*] who is smart enough and really respectful and loves cinema so much that he cast a really great group of actors which he pulled from independent cinema. It was really fun. That was the first time that



FIVE STAR TURNS

DONNIE DARKO 2001
"It's a journey about discovering who you are," said Gyllenhaal when first promoting this time-travelling, mind-melting splice of John Hughes and David Lynch. Well, we learned JG's a movie star.

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 2005
Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger were both Oscar nommed for Ang Lee's melancholy gay western. "What a sad, broken-hearted fellow he is," said Gyllenhaal of his character Jack.

ZODIAC 2007
Obsessive newspaper men Gyllenhaal and Robert Downey Jr. and cop Mark Ruffalo lose their souls to the Zodiac Killer in David Fincher's meticulous procedural movie.

ENEMY 2013
Gyllenhaal gave Denis Villeneuve three ace turns in 2013 – as the detective in *Prisoners* and as the history professor obsessed with his actor doppelgänger in this brain-scrambling thriller.

NIGHTCRAWLER 2014
"I didn't feel great playing him… he was pretty hard to shake," said Gyllenhaal of vampiric reporter Louis Bloom, who feeds off LA's crime scenes. ***JG***











I experienced sitting around and waiting for a big star on set. In this case, it was a wave. "Let's wait for the water to come back from its trailer."

***Prince Of Persia* aside, you've steered clear of 'franchise' movies. Has that been a conscious decision?**

I think I started a bit too early with those movies, because I hadn't cultivated relationships with filmmakers that I would want to make a big movie like that with; where we could explore the process in a different, smaller way, but in the context of something much bigger. I am looking for that process in something on a grander scale, so no, I don't think it's something I shy away from. It's just that I want to be a partner in a process. That's something I learned to ask for early on. If that's not possible I feel like I probably shouldn't be a part of it, because I like to explore character. Even if it's a small film, if that's not possible, it's hard for me to be a part of it. I can't just show up and say a couple of lines. I really want to spend the time exploring something beforehand. I don't want to go on set and talk about it to death. I'm not that kind of actor.

Is that the kind of relationship you cultivated with Denis Villeneuve on *Prisoners* and *Enemy*?

Yeah, that's exactly it. That's Denis, and that's my relationship with him. We push each other's boundaries and ask the questions, and he allows me the room to create something. He loves the specificity of character, as long as it doesn't interfere with his process. He and I are both very similar in that way. It's why we made those two movies, and it's why we will make other ones. We've since gone off and done different things in the past couple of years, and we will work together again. I know that we're both itching to. The movies he's making are mind-boggling to me now. It's so cool to come up with someone and watch them surpass even their expectations. *Blade Runner*'s a huge critical success, which is no surprise to me. I just want him back!

***Brokeback Mountain* was a landmark film early in your career. Did you have to fight for the role?**

I was young. I was still auditioning for many things at that time, and I auditioned for that. So fighting for it? Kind of. It was an odd process in that I read it, and then had this awkward meeting with Ang [*Lee*], which is normal for Ang. He was thinking about a combination of different actors for a month, and then that set of actors didn't

JAKE GYLLENHAAL IN NUMBERS

25
Years old when he received his only Oscar nom to date, for *Brokeback Mountain*.

$544m
Box office of his biggest hit, *The Day After Tomorrow*.

33
Total number of feature films he's appeared in.

28
Pounds of lean muscle he put on to play a boxer in *Southpaw*.

30
Pounds lost to play gaunt crime photojournalist Louis Bloom in *Nightcrawler*.



want to do it, and the other logical set was me and Heath. I have no idea about his thinking process, but I'm grateful to those people that didn't want to do it! I was just thrilled to be in an Ang Lee movie, and I thought the story was so beautiful. That was a film where I had no idea it would become the phenomenon that it did. We made this very small, intimate movie, and then all of a sudden it became something else.

Is it true that Sam Raimi almost cast you in *Spider-Man 2*?
There are a lot of almost-castings of me in a lot of things that you can probably talk about! There are a number more you probably don't know about that are even more intriguing. I have been involved, in one way or another, with a number of those superhero movies, and would have loved to have been a part of that, and to have been a part of Christopher Nolan's vibe. It just hasn't seemed to be my path – at least, not as yet. Though I don't see a 37-year-old Spider-Man in anybody's future. You've got to be able to climb up buildings, and at a certain point your back just can't handle it.

You've never revisited a character. Is that something that intrigues you?
Yeah, absolutely, long form definitely intrigues me. I see my sister and my brother-in-law [*Peter Sarsgaard*] doing *The Deuce*. She also did *The Honourable Woman*, and loved it, because there was an opportunity to really explore that character over a long period of time. So, definitely. I don't want to say there's a desire to do a sequel, necessarily. I don't think that's a career goal. But sometimes it's nice having created a character that you love, to be able to do it again. I miss those words that Dan Gilroy wrote for *Nightcrawler*, and it's sad to let them be, and not to think of them again. It's why I love the stage, because you come back every night. And there's a guarantee: you've got a guy, you did all the work, and you get to do it again.

You've got Jacques Audiard's English-language debut *The Sisters Brothers* coming up next year…
Oh my God, that was the honour of my career to work with Audiard, who's my favourite filmmaker in the world, and those actors. Holy shit, those actors. I walked on set and was like, "Erm… is my name on the call sheet?" I really don't geek out, but I was in awe to be on [*Audiard's*] set. I mean, to be working with Joaquin [*Phoenix*], and John [*C. Reilly*],

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and Riz [*Ahmed*], for the second time, it was just an honour. We're all so different, and then to have a director who was able to pull it all together, who was so agile but so specific… it feels like he's speaking to you in the fifth dimension. I hope that the movie is what the experience was, because if it's even half of it, it will be excellent.

Looking back on your career, is there anything you would do differently?
In terms of attitude, I'd have more of a sense of humour about everything, and the idea that hard work and enough talent will do you OK, that there is no perfect. For a long time I was striving to be the best at what I do, but it's just not possible. I think it's a very young idea, and I stopped when I met Denis, I would say. Because he showed me he is a real artist amidst all this stuff. Even as his movies become more and more popular, he maintains his artistry. He made me realise that making movies is about the connections between people and what that inspires in you as an artist. I've seen him take screenplays and illuminate them in ways that I don't think the screenwriter would ever have seen. So when I look back, I wish I was able to cultivate that relationship with every single filmmaker I worked with, and I'm starting to learn how to do that.



OFF THE ROPES
A bulked-up Gyllenhaal as comeback boxer Billy Hope in *Southpaw*.

Surely it must have happened with other filmmakers along the way…
As a kid growing up and learning the process sometimes, out of your own sense of hubris, you don't realise you are in service of a director's story, and his vision. I learned that with Denis, and David Ayer [*on* End Of Watch], too, and I did it unconsciously along the way with certain filmmakers. But it's a very conscious choice I've made now – that I am in service of a director's vision. Particularly when I am an actor for hire on a project; I will do anything to help them get to that place they see, and hopefully beyond that to a place they never thought it could go. That's my only regret, that there are times when I didn't always do that.

> **I DON'T HAVE GREAT ADMIRATION FOR THE MIDDLE GROUND**

You mentioned a sense of humour. Is that what pushed you towards *Okja*? That role certainly got people talking…
I don't know what that was! I'm just looking to explore, you know? I'm looking to have fun. I feel if I have fun, I can discover more, and it's more fun for an audience to watch. In the case of *Okja*, I didn't realise how divisive that performance was going to be. People *hated* that performance, but some people really loved it. I don't do it to be provocative. I like that a choice I make is bold enough to split people's opinions. I don't want to exist in a space where I am liked by everyone or I'm content all the time, because then I don't feel like I'm living. But I also don't want to shock for shock's value. I think that's bullshit.

Is risk-taking an important quality to you then?
The actors I admire and look to are the actors who take risks, and sometimes they fail. I don't have great admiration for the middle ground. It's not really my space. For instance, when I saw Natalie Portman in *Jackie* I thought, "That is a bold fucking performance." Because it was right on the line of success and failure, walking it like a tightrope. That's where we should be. We should be challenging a world where convention has become the norm, and capitalism and profit seems to be the most important thing; where audiences know more about first-week grosses than they know about the subject of a movie. It's about: can we try something new? Can we do something fun? Can we enjoy this thing while we have the opportunity?

STRONGER OPENS ON 8 DECEMBER.

JAKE GYLLENHAAL FAN CLUB

"Jake came from a family of filmmakers. I could just step back and learn from him."
Richard Kelly

"Jake put a lot into the process. A lot of what you see [*in* Prisoners] was not originally there. He humanised his character. Jake plays him in a very three-dimensional way."
Hugh Jackman

"I have a very strong relationship with Jake and love his work."
Denis Villeneuve


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ALL DRAGONS BLAZING

HOW GAME OF THRONES S7 TURNS UP THE HEAT

97

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ILLUSTRATION BY LIZZY THOMAS



flash freeze

EVIL UNMASKED, DRAGON DRAMA. HBO'S HIT KEEPS US ON EDGE...

GAME OF THRONES SEASON 7 *15*

SHOW ★★★★½ EXTRAS ★★★★½

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HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE *2009*
Broadbent dispenses potions advice as Professor Slughorn.

A HIJACKING *2012*
More Asbæk at sea, in a maxi-tension pirate drama.

As cold opens go, the one that kickstarts *Game Of Thrones*' seventh season is a belter. A villain thought dead apparently lives; one spiked drink later and the truth emerges. Winter declares its arrival – and it's wearing a surprise face. As director Jeremy Podeswa says on a sparky commentary with John Bradley (Samwell Tarly) and a sharp-as-nails Gwendoline Christie (Brienne), this delicious unmasking is "one of the big what-the-f moments" in a season of many.

It's an attention-grabbing strategy to put a scene like that upfront, but that's S7 in a nutshell. It's a season in which chickens such as Arya (Maisie Williams) come home to roost in satisfying and often startling ways. And it doesn't dawdle about steering them into position.

Some complaints were sounded about this full-thrust approach when the series aired: many argue that the show's rigour has been surrendered as it outpaces George R.R. Martin's novels. To some degree, the doubts hold water. As a teamed-up Jon Snow (Kit Harington), Daenerys (Emilia Clarke) and Tyrion (Peter Dinklage) contemplate war tactics, the plan to catch a wight and gift it to Cersei (Lena Headey) as proof of a threat worth uniting over could have been more persuasively wrought. And even though the catch-a-zombie episode thrills, the pacing wobbles. Might an extra episode in the shortened, seven-episode run have fixed the cracks?

BUSTING ICE-BLOCKS

Perhaps, but a counter-argument goes that S7 is *Thrones*' season of pay-offs, dispatched fast (mostly) and without compromising the deep-threaded tensions. While previous seasons presented *Thrones* as medieval horror, conspiracy fantasy or otherwise, this is it in leather-trousered rock 'n' roll blockbuster mode, with our complicated investment in key characters honoured as the spectacle shrieks off the charts. The series' big, beating heart is indulged, too: the help Samwell extends to greyscale victim

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Jon's idea of a charm offensive.





COLD FRONT
Autumn's over and the Night King's southbound (top); it's a rocky time for sibling sweethearts Cersei and Jaime (above); Tyrion lends Daenerys a hand (below).

Jorah (Iain Glen) breaks *Thrones*' crueler rules, even as it breaks Archmaester Ebrose's (Jim Broadbent) in-show rules of medical practice. (It's pleasingly gross, mind.)

The routes between set-pieces and chin-wags, meanwhile, are expertly spliced: the show-stoppers arrive depth-charged, the talky bits tooled to thrill. Dany's challenge to Conleth Hill's slippery Varys equals any dragon attack for gnaw-your-knuckles intensity. The opening convo between Jaime (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) and Cersei holds you rapt like great theatre as it unfolds on a floor-map; Cersei strides over the world like she owns it. And the segue to the arrival of psycho-punk Euron Greyjoy's (Pilou Asbæk) fleet is magnificent as both spectacle and dark foreshadowing.

Previous seasons' tendencies to deliver balls-out battles at episode nine are subverted by a hit-'em-fast assault from Euron in episode two, in which Theon's (Alfie Allen) shot at redemption keeps the dramatic stakes focused. And two episodes on, the roaring ruck between Dany's dragons and the Lannister army brings something freshly engaging to *Thrones*' well-established spread of battles: a conflict where we want neither side to win. With his aghast reaction to Jaime's dragon run, Tyrion surely speaks for us all: "You fucking idiot!"

Big as those dragons get, their visual impact is matched by metaphorical value. Dinklage makes Tyrion's despair over Dany's deployment of them register hard. And though past seasons have hinted at it, the use of WMDs becomes increasingly precarious when the risk of having them turned against you takes fresh, deep-frozen shape.

WIGHT HEAT

That last magisterial reveal is indicative of S7's twists, which satisfy because they confront characters at their own game, be it Cersei's poisonous vengeance or the sisterly strategising of a master manipulator. But they beg a question: could *Thrones* yet be felled by its own game, the rise of the White Walkers? We've been warned that winter's arrival will overshadow other battles, but the Night King is no match as a character for the humans. That evil stare wouldn't be much cop in a talk-off with Tyrion.

Thankfully, show bosses David Benioff and D.B. Weiss know it. While the climax gives old blue-eyes his IMAX-worthy money shots, it's also wise enough to toss fragile allegiances into doubt, splinter others, weave in ground-shaking revelations and take time to revel in charged glances between players. "Battle of the death stares," is how Emilia Clarke describes the Dany/Cersei face-off on well-stacked extras, which include commentaries and breakdowns of key scenes – the boat battle looks flaming terrifying pre-CGI. Just as the fall of Frey's followers was re-positioned before the wight stuff at S7's opening, so S8's challenge will be to prioritise character-focused moments even as it answers the call to max the scale. Minor flaws aside, S7's often ferocious assault leaves little reason for worry. ***Kevin Harley***



'THIS IS THRONES IN LEATHER-TROUSERED ROCK 'N' ROLL MODE'



Getting his ticket out wasn't going to be easy...

well swung

WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT GAGS...

SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING *12*

FILM ★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

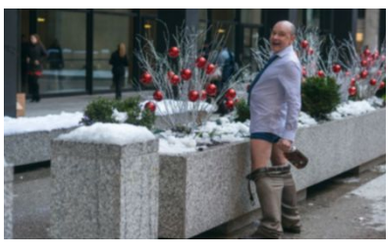
OUT NOW Digital HD **20 NOVEMBER** DVD, BD, 4K **EXTRAS** Featurettes, Deleted scenes, Gag reel, Captain America PSAs

The best joke in *Homecoming* – Peter Parker's first film proper in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, after *Captain America: Civil War*'s crowd-pleasing cameo – is that this big-screen superhero veteran is suddenly the callow newcomer in someone else's story.

The film finds a remarkably fresh, funny tone simply by positioning Spidey (Tom Holland) as an Avengers fanboy, swinging with glee in the margins of Marvel's weightier peers. That allows Robert Downey Jr. to recapture his wit as Tony Stark, while Captain America (Chris Evans) appears solely for the sake of a superb running gag (which gets its own bonus feature).

This makes for a more grounded adventure, exemplified by Michael Keaton's Vulture, the best Marvel villain since Loki. He's an underdog like Peter, a shadow of Stark and an inversion of the superhero Keaton once played.

Also, by putting Peter back in high school, this hits the Spidey sweet spot. Like a turbo-charged John Hughes teen comedy, its laughs come from seeing a clumsy kid in a genre that's become the slick preserve of grown-ups. The perfectly cast Holland's exuberance makes the set-pieces sing with a personality that the spectacle-heavy Marvel films can lack. ***Simon Kinnear***



OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY *15*

FILM ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, Digital HD **EXTRAS** Extended version (BD), Commentary, Featurettes, Outtakes, Deleted/extended scenes

An ensemble cast working through increasingly raucous exploits is a tried, tested and lazy formula. Centred on relatable workplace politics, this Yule-com adds nothing new. Jason Bateman and T.J. Miller throw a wild bash to secure a new client, all while at odds with boss Jennifer Aniston. Character comedy comes from Kate McKinnon and Jillian Bell, but reliance on debauched merriment yields little laughter or charm. ***Matt Looker***



THE BEGUILED *15*

FILM ★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★☆☆☆

OUT NOW Digital HD **20 NOVEMBER** DVD, BD **EXTRAS** Featurettes

Adapted as a grand guignol thriller by Don Siegel in 1971, with a predatory Clint Eastwood forcing snogs on a 12-year-old girl, Thomas Cullinan's Civil War-era novel, written in 1966, is here shot through a feminist lens by Sofia Coppola. Colin Farrell plays wounded Union soldier John McBurney as more cad than brute, while the coterie of women (Nicole Kidman, Kirsten Dunst, Elle Fanning) who nurse him at a Virginian seminary are subtly shaded in their sexual awakening. Exquisitely shot, playful and poised. ***Jamie Graham***



WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES *12*

FILM ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW Digital HD **27 NOVEMBER** DVD, BD, 3D BD, 4K **EXTRAS** Commentary, Featurettes (BD), Deleted scenes, Concept art

The rebooted *Apes* trilogy climaxes with a finale that reaches a satisfying end point without adding much substance to what's gone before. Yes, Andy Serkis' Caesar – here seeking revenge on mankind – remains a masterly combo of VFX and soulful emoting, while Woody Harrelson fumes as his Kurtz-like nemesis. From a storytelling standpoint, alas, it's more snore than war, with a solemnity absent from *Rise* and *Dawn*. ***Neil Smith***

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ATOMIC BLONDE *15*

FILM ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

OUT 4 DECEMBER Digital HD
11 DECEMBER DVD, BD, 4K **EXTRAS** Commentary, Deleted scenes, Featurettes, Storyboards

With eyes that could freeze the ice in your Stoli at 40 paces, Charlize Theron makes deep-cool work of the super-spy in David Leitch's riff on retro-noir comic *The Coldest City*. Pity the plot betrays her. As a Theron vehicle, *Blonde* atomises *Æon Flux*; as a spy flick, it shakes up some wicked fight scenes without stirring up much interest in Theron's investigation into a dead MI6 operative. The surfaces and soundtrack dazzle, but Wick/Bourne had more going on beneath. ***Kevin Harley***



TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST KNIGHT *12*

FILM ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★★☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, 3D BD, 4K, Digital HD **EXTRAS** Featurettes

Michael Bay ends his *Transformers* tenure not with a bang but a whimper, albeit an ear-blistering one. First-time viewers shouldn't worry about the mangled mythology; none of it adds up, even if you've seen the previous four movies. Mark Wahlberg returns as inventor-warrior Cade Yeager, but ham of the match is Anthony Hopkins. Our wild-eyed guide to the story's attempts at rewriting history (all of it), he looks like he's having a blast. Shame it's not contagious. Extras feature Bay directing via loudhailer and not taking any crap, even from his own frickin' mother. ***Matthew Leyland***



MY COUSIN RACHEL *12*

FILM ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, Digital HD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Deleted scenes, Featurettes

This atmospheric Daphne du Maurier adap stays admirably true to its core ambiguity: is Rachel (Rachel Weisz) a predatory black widow, poisoning Sam Claflin's infatuated heir, Philip, as she did his cousin before? Or is it all in Phil's mind? Solid performances make this a respectable option for anyone craving a dark period piece, but overall it feels too slight to warrant a hard recommend. Similarly decent if unremarkable extras include commentary with director Roger Michell. ***Matt Maytum***



THE BIG SICK *15*

FILM ★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW Digital HD **20 NOVEMBER** DVD, BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Making Of, Featurettes, Deleted scenes

Silicon Valley's Kumail Nanjiani, together with his co-writer/wife Emily Gordon revisit their rocky early days together – when he hid his impending arranged marriage and she fell dangerously ill – in this surprisingly truthful and excruciatingly funny romcom. Zoe Kazan plays Emily, sparking up a winning chemistry with Nanjiani, who mines his years as a stand-up. Exploring cultural differences with his Pakistani family, it's a startling and original love story – funny, frank and heartwarming. ***James Mottram***



DESPICABLE ME 3 *U*

FILM ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, 3D BD, 4K, Digital HD **EXTRAS** Mini-movie, Making Of, Deleted scene, Featurettes, Music video

Sure, those Tic Tac-shaped Minions, once so tangy, have long since left a sour taste in the mouth, but this third adventure – in which Gru (Steve Carell) discovers he has a twin brother, Dru (Carell again), and battles '80s kiddie star-turned-villain Balthazar Bratt (Trey Parker) – has oodles of invention. The sounds aren't bad either, with era-defining tunes by Michael Jackson, A-ha and Madonna drowning out the blighters' babbling. Incredibly, the franchise (including spin-off *Minions*) has taken $3.7bn. ***Jamie Graham***



CULT OF CHUCKY *18*

FILM ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Featurettes

The *Conjuring* universe's Annabelle is now horror's devil doll du jour, but Chucky ain't ready to die quite yet. This seventh instalment (following 2013's *Curse Of Chucky*) sees franchise stalwart Don Mancini, on writing and directing duty for the third time, conjure the ghost of 1987's *A Nightmare On Elm Street 3* by having his plastic-fantastic fiend (again voiced by Brad Dourif) butcher patients in a psychiatric hospital. Fans will flip for the grisly deaths and returning characters and sub-plots – yep, Jennifer Tilly is back for a fourth outing as Tiffany – but there's little here to make Annabelle scared. ***Jamie Graham***


He'd been gone longer than he thought...

beast in show
STILL IN GREAT SHAPE...

THE THING *18*

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

1982 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Documentaries, Featurettes, Stills galleries, Booklet

Released to deafening indifference in the summer of *E.T.* – and on the same day as Ridley Scott's similarly overlooked *Blade Runner*, no less – John Carpenter's Antarctic horror has stood the test of time, as though perfectly preserved in ice for 35 years. A claustrophobic, paranoia-powered classic with never-bettered creature effects by Rob Bottin, *The Thing* hasn't lost any of its ability to chill.

Bearded everyman MacReady (Kurt Russell) is the helicopter pilot for a crew of researchers who find their camp invaded by a parasitic, shape-shifting alien that hides in plain sight. Mining every drop of suspense from a simple premise – can you trust your own eyes? – it's a masterclass in unremitting tension and environmental dread.

Proving that remakes done right can transcend even celebrated originals (1951's *The Thing From Another World*), Carpenter paints a bleak picture of humanity; self-preservation is the priority, even for the 'heroic' MacReady. But that only adds to the film's nihilistic punch, alongside a marrow-shaking score, top-tier performances and those sensational practical effects.

Receiving the lavish Arrow Video treatment, this edition comes with a superb 4K remaster overseen by Carpenter and cinematographer Dean Cundey, two new documentaries and hours of archive features. Short of Denis Villeneuve signing on to direct *The Thing 2049*, it's the finest tribute to Carpenter's masterwork yet. ***Jordan Farley***



CARNIVAL OF SOULS *12*

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

1962 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Documentaries, Video essay, Deleted scenes

Shot in just three weeks by a crew of six for a mere $33,000, Herk Harvey's ghost story was influenced by German expressionism, Cocteau and Bergman, and in turn shaped the cinema of Romero and Lynch. Eerily shot in black and white, it follows Mary (Candace Hilligoss) as she escapes a car crash, acquires work as a church organist and finds herself mysteriously drawn to a lakeside pavilion. Supremely spooky – even the amateur thesping adds to the aberrant atmosphere. ***Jamie Graham***



TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY *15*

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★☆

1991 **OUT 4 DECEMBER** DVD, BD, 3D BD, 4K **EXTRAS** Featurettes, Commentary, Deleted scenes

Fresh from its 3D cinema re-release, James Cameron's seminal sci-fi sequel gets a spanking new home-ent roll-out. Extras-wise, the biggest addition here is *T2: Reprogramming The Terminator*, a 55-minute doc featuring fresh interviews with Cameron, Arnold Schwarzenegger and more, plus some great behind-scenes footage (Linda Hamilton on a gun range, Robert Patrick cracking up on set). The 4K restoration is sumptuous too; one of the best sci-fis ever made just got better. ***James Mottram***



WILLARD/BEN *15*

FILMS ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

1971/72 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD **EXTRAS** Commentaries, Interviews, Galleries

Proving that there's no greater love than that of a boy and his obedient army of killer rats, *Willard* set the bar somewhere around the middle for the rodent-horror genre in 1971. Played for sobs rather than scares, it's an oddly sweet tale of a misfit man-child (Bruce Davison, *X-Men*'s Senator Kelly) who uses his pets to gnaw the faces off his bullies. The sequel, 1972's *Ben*, is justly only remembered for its Michael Jackson theme song, and swaps most of the oddball drama for more and more rat action. ***Paul Bradshaw***



AGATHA CHRISTIE MOVIES *PG*

FILMS ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

1974-1982 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD (separately) **EXTRAS** Featurettes, Interviews, Galleries

If Kenneth Branagh's *Murder On The Orient Express* (see review, p44) whets your appetite for all-star Christie adaps, gorge on a four-pack that boasts two Hercule Poirots (Albert Finney, Peter Ustinov), one Miss Marple (Angela Lansbury) and as many glamorous locations as it has dead bodies. The original *Orient* (1974, ★★★★) is the pick of the bunch, followed closely by *Death On The Nile* (1978, ★★★★). The campy *Evil Under The Sun* (1982, ★★★) impresses less, though, while Lansbury's *The Mirror Crack'd* (1980, ★★★) now resembles a *Murder, She Wrote* dry-run. ***Neil Smith***



LE PLAISIR *PG*

FILM ★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

1952 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Documentary, Featurette, Booklet

Like Max Ophüls' earlier *La Ronde*, this handsomely restored trio of Guy de Maupassant tales about the price of love and pleasure insists cynically that, "Happiness is not a joyful thing," Ophüls' restless camera whirls through a pretty parade of human folly via a mysterious dancehall dandy, a sex worker and an arrogant artist. Gorgeously staged (Ophüls was Oscar-nommed for Art Direction), with fine turns from Jean Gabin and Danielle Darrieux, it's packaged here with detailed featurettes aimed at Ophüls completists. ***Kate Stables***



MIRACLE MILE *15*

FILM ★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★★★☆

1988 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentaries, Featurettes, Alternate ending

As Harry (Anthony Edwards) and Julie (Mare Winningham) meet cute in LA, this could be any cheesy '80s romance. That is, until Harry intercepts a call announcing imminent nuclear armageddon… Steve De Jarnatt's dark drama was the *mother!* of its era, a gutsy, challenging watch whose discomforting escalation from social satire to bruising barbarism made it an inevitable box-office flop. Today, its impact is undimmed. It's dated only by its Tangerine Dream score; what's scary is how plausible it remains. ***Simon Kinnear***



SCARS OF DRACULA *18*

FILM ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★☆☆☆

1970 **OUT NOW** Dual Format **EXTRAS** Featurette

The film that most Hammer purists pretend to ignore, Christopher Lee's sixth outing as the sun-shy count is generally considered the moment when the horror house started to crumble. A plastic bat conveniently resurrects a dead Drac in the opening scene and the following 90 minutes are all cheap sets, awful acting and Hammer's first R-rated levels of gore. It's hardly a classic, but still worth a watch for Lee, who sinks his fangs into a juicier amount of screen time than usual. ***Paul Bradshaw***



THE PARTY *PG*

FILM ★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★★★☆

1968 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Featurettes, Profiles

Tonight is one big round of laughter!" beams Hrundi V. Bakshi (Peter Sellers, in brownface) in Blake Edwards' cult comedy. Sadly, 1968's audiences disagreed: while harking back to the silents and Jacques Tati, perhaps its technically brilliant, heavily improvisational style was also just too far ahead of its time. Sellers utterly disappears into his role as the loveable chaos merchant invited by mistake to an LA party teeming with drunks, racists and sex-pest producers (clearly, nothing much changes in Hollywood). ***Ali Catterall***



THE WAGES OF FEAR *12*

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

1953 **OUT NOW** Dual Format **EXTRAS** Commentary, Interviews, Essay booklet

Four desperados, including a grizzled Yves Montand, embark on a near-certain suicide mission in Henri-Georges Clouzot's classic existential thriller. The goal: ferry truckloads of volatile nitro-glycerine ("One bump and you're a goner") across the South American jungle to put out a blazing oil well fire for $2,000 each – the titular wages. With no let-up in suspense, it's a bleak and brilliant action-noir – as black as the oil spills that their "coffins on wheels" slip through, amid crumbling bridges and rocky landslides. ***Ali Catterall***

COMPILED BY MATTHEW LEYLAND



TOTAL FILM MUST HAVE ★★★★★

GET (P)ORGANISED!

At some point we'll all have to take a break from repeat viewings of *The Last Jedi* to do the Christmas shopping. Over the next several pages you'll find gift suggestions spanning the movie and TV galaxy – starting with the greatest space story ever told...



LEGO ULTIMATE COLLECTOR SERIES MILLENNIUM FALCON

RRP £649.99 shop.lego.com

★ It'll put a hole in your wallet and could give Santa a hernia. But with 7,541 pieces – the biggest Lego set to date, beating the Taj Mahal – this Lego Store exclusive will keep brick-fanciers busy till next Christmas. Minifigures included cover all bases: classic trilogy (Han and co), *The Force Awakens* (older Han and co) and *The Last Jedi* (buildable porgs times two!). Other, less pricey Lego Falcons are also available.



DROID INVENTOR KIT

RRP £99.99 various

We can't promise your finished R2 unit won't scoot off on some secret mission, but at least putting it together's easy-peasy with this all-ages-friendly combo of littleBits electronic blocks and free Droid Inventor app. You can tinker and reconfigure until you've got an overweight glob of grease that's yours and yours alone.

SUBSCRIBE AT WWW.TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS



BIG FIGS

RRP £19.99 various

Last Jedi characters writ 18 inches large. (Or 20 inches in the case of Captain Phasma.)



PORG MUG

RRP £12.99 disneystore.co.uk

Still the cutest thing in the galaxy, even semi-decapitated.



12V LANDSPEEDER

RRP £499.99 toysrus.co.uk

Cruise the Tatooine dunes – or garden path – in Luke's trusty two-seater.



KYLO REN ELECTRONIC LIGHTSABER

RRP £54.99 various

Launch a three-pronged (play) attack.



RALPH MCQUARRIE: 100 POSTCARDS

RRP £23.99 various

Classic space paintings from the god of concept artists, perfect for display (the box doubles as a frame) or sending to a friend. Make sure it's someone deserving, mind.



KEEP CUPS

RRP £14-£25 uk.keepcup.com

Enjoy your daily brew with an extra shot of sustainability; these reusable cups range from kid-friendly BB-8/R2 designs to the adult-sized Rey/stormtrooper/Vader versions and the XXL Chewie model, which holds 16oz of blue milk (or alternative beverage).

LITTLE SOMETHINGS

Hard to resist...



BB-8 IPHONE CASE

RRP £12.99

various

When you're expecting an important P(h)o(n)e call.



HELIX STATIONERY

RRP £24.99

various

Hole-punch it, Chewie!



BB-8 ALARM CLOCK

RRP £19.99

various

Time to get rolling...



BLUETOOTH ITEM FINDERS

RRP £20

various

What every stop-and-search stormtrooper needs.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Pimp your lounge/dining room/downstairs loo...



RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK MELTING TOHT CANDLE

RRP £19.99 shop.bfi.org.uk

TOTAL FILM MUST HAVE ★★★★★

★ When the book of '80s movie deaths is written, it'll have Gestapo git Toht's melting face and ping-pong eyeballs on the cover. And now you can recreate the grisliest 12 seconds in PG-cinema history with this wax wonder, which burns a bit slower than the movie and won't scream the lounge down.



LABYRINTH DOOR KNOCKERS

RRP £65 etsy.com

Cinema's most famous knockers – stop sniggering, Sid James – lovingly recreated in polyester resin with a metallic finish. No, they don't talk, but they're nice and light so you can haul them around the house till you find the right spot to hang 'em.

FICTIONAL HOTEL NOTEPADS

RRP £18 shop.bfi.org.uk

Eight movie-inspired paper pads, from The Overlook (*The Shining*) to the Royal Imperial Windsor Arms Hotel (from – anyone? – *European Vacation*).



LIGHT RELIEF

A few bright ideas...

PAC-MAN SOUND CHIP LAMP
RRP £29.99
thefowndry.com
Featuring 12 arcade sounds and dimmer switch.



ZOMBIE HEAD CANDLE
RRP £9.99
thefowndry.com
Why not stage a, um, head-to-head with Melting Toht?



MARVEL CLIP-ON LOOK-ALITES
RRP £5 *forbidden planet.co.uk*
Keyring torches. Or alt-decorations, you decide.



SUBSCRIBE AT WWW.TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS



THE GOONIES PLAYING CARDS

RRP £14.99 firebox.com

Remember to give the deck a good truffle-shuffle first…



COMIC HERO FIDGET CUBES

RRP £9.99 thefowndry.com

Six-sided superhero-branded stress-relief toys; keep 'em on standby for when the rellies are late/won't leave.

BATMAN INFINITY LIGHT

RRP £34.99 *various*

Dual powered (battery or USB), this is the optical-illusion LED you need right now.





ODE TO JOYPADS

Best of the button-bashers…

NINTENDO SWITCH WITH SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY

RRP £329

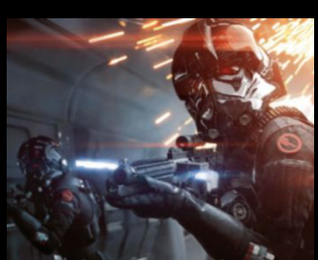
It's been a wonderful debut year for Nintendo's hybrid console. Off to a flyer with the astonishing *Breath Of The Wild*, Switch has its second copper-bottomed classic with its latest Mario game. A sprawling and dazzlingly versatile adventure, *Odyssey* lets the intrepid plumber fling his cap at enemies – from goombas to T-rexes – to inhabit them. Consistently inventive and funny, it's the ideal game to kickstart the festivities.



XBOX ONE X

RRP £449.99

Touted as "the most powerful console ever made", Microsoft's upgraded model is firmly aimed at tech connoisseurs. Designed for Ultra HD displays, it comes with a 4K Blu-ray player, and offers superior resolution and performance for existing games. It's short on essential exclusives, but the mesmeric animation of *Cuphead* should look better than ever.



STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II

RRP from £49.99

PC, PS4, Xbox One

Landing just before *The Last Jedi* hits cinemas this festive season, EA's shooter sequel is a near-cert for the Christmas number one slot. Gathering characters from all three eras, its dynamic online battles let you pit Rey against Vader, or have Phasma and Palpatine fighting side by side. Lone players, meanwhile, can sink their teeth into a brand new story mode that casts you as the leader of an Imperial Special Forces group.



CALL OF DUTY: WWII

RRP from £47.99

PC, PS4, Xbox One

Abandoning the future tech of recent entries, Activision has chosen to keep its boots on the ground as *COD* returns to history's deadliest conflict for the first time in nine years. No mod cons means no regenerating health: if you're shot you'll need to find a medic, and you're forced to share ammo with squad-mates. Pacifists can capture rather than kill enemies, earning experience for their clemency to unlock new skills.



ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS

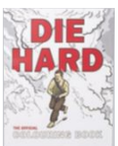
RRP from £47.99

PC, PS4, Xbox One

A fresh start for Ubisoft's blockbuster series, *Origins* rewinds to ancient Egypt, pitting protagonist Bayek – the first in the Assassin lineage – against a shadowy organisation pre-dating the Templars. With a literal interpretation of 'eagle vision' letting you fly a bird over unexplored territory to scout enemies, alongside improved stealth and combat, it should provide rather better holiday entertainment than this year's movie adap…

PAPER CHAMPIONS

Start spreading the word(s)...



DIE HARD: THE OFFICIAL COLOURING BOOK

RRP £9.99 various

Make sure you've got plenty of greys and reds for Bruce's vest…



THE ART AND SOUL OF BLADE RUNNER 2049

RRP £39.99 various

All those behind-the-scenes moments… captured in glorious oversized hardback!



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND: THE ULTIMATE VISUAL HISTORY

RRP £40 various

Mothership-sized tribute to the *other* sci-fi classic turning 40.



THE MAKING OF DUNKIRK

RRP £35 various

Dispatches from behind the scenes of one of the year's best, penned by *TF*'s very own James Mottram.



MUST-SEE MUSICALS

RRP £18.99 various

From the Best Picture-winning *Broadway Melody* to the nearly Best Picture-winning *La La Land*.



THE ART OF HORROR MOVIES

RRP £27.50 various

Gorgeous gore from the silents to the present, intro-ed by genre ace John Landis.



WALL TREATS

View to a thrill...



WONDER WOMAN

RRP from £19.99 firebox.com

Or a Diana print, if you will.

YIPPEE KI-YAY

RRP from £19.99 firebox.com

The fall of Hans Gruber, from the series 'Satisfying Villain Deaths'.

THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

RRP from £19.99 firebox.com

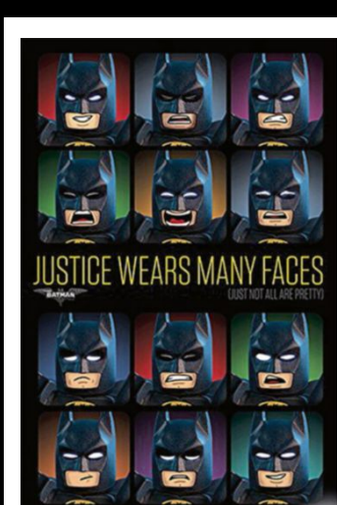
Moonlight and love and romance and, um, bats.

LEGO BATMAN

RRP from £6 amazon.co.uk

The Dark Knight shows his range.





THE BEST A **SUPER HERO** CAN GET



DC

JUSTICE LEAGUE™

IN CINEMAS NOVEMBER 17

Limited edition handle available in-store now

Gillette®

JUSTICE LEAGUE and all related characters and elements © & TM DC Comics and Warner Bros. Entertainment inc.

THREAD ALERT

What the best-dressed screen fan is wearing this season...



ELF CHRISTMAS SWEATER

RRP £30 uglychristmassweater.com

Just the thing for your best Buddy.



BB-8 CARDIGAN

RRP £38 uglychristmassweater.com

Spreading a little Christmas sphere with our favourite rolling ball.



STRANGER THINGS CHRISTMAS SWEATER

RRP £26.58 target.com

★ When Winona Ryder's Joyce turned her living room wall into a Ouija board, little did she know it'd inspire a jaunty Christmas jersey. The words we're seeing are 'on trend'.



FRANK THE BUNNY SLIPPERS

RRP £29.99 shop.bfi.org.uk

Cover up your stupid man feet.



STAR WARS JUMPERS

RRP £38 uglychristmassweater.com

Embrace the Daft Side…



DIE HARD T-SHIRT

RRP £20 lastexittonowhere.com

Mark the 30th anniversary one year early!



TWIN PEAKS T-SHIRT

RRP £20 lastexittonowhere.com

Damn fine apparel.

SUBSCRIBE AT WWW.TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

UNSILENT NIGHTS

Add these to your Christmas playlist...



GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 T-SHIRT

RRP £19.99 darkbunnytees.com

It's time to embrace your inner triangle-faced monkey.



STAR WARS T-SHIRT

RRP £15 darkbunnytees.com

Now that's what you call a puffin top...



BLADE RUNNER T-SHIRT

RRP £12 darkbunnytees.com

Two more words: tee and hee.



HARRY POTTER: ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACKS I-V

RRP £199.99 various

Lovers of vinyl wizardry, raise your wands: windows to the past reopen with this covetable boxset of picture-disc albums from *Potters I-V*, featuring John Williams, Patrick Doyle, Nicholas Hooper, and Jarvis Cocker screeching. Get the nostalgic tingles to 'Hedwig's Theme', chill to 'Voldemort', and thrill to 'Buckbeak's Flight', all while watching Harry's face twirling.



HANS ZIMMER: LIVE IN PRAGUE

RRP £12.99 various

Zimmer rocks the arena masses in a document of his recent global tour, issued on various AV formats with all due pomp. Put simply, expect a show, not a recital. Zimmer's a game entertainer, multitasking at stage-front with Johnny Marr, and the music for *Gladiator*, *The Dark Knight*, *Inception*, *Interstellar* et al maxes the drama thrillingly. No *Batman* footage required.



COCO

RRP £20 various

Long after 'Let It Go' colonised our brains, *Frozen* song duo Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez have remobilised for Pixar's music-driven Mexican Land of the Dead movie. With the Mexican Institute of Sound's Camilo Lara on hand as musical supervisor, and further music from Germaine Franco, Adrian Molina and Michael Giacchino also interwoven, emotionally charged ear-wormery is surely a given.



STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI

RRP £12.99 various

On 22 May, Twitter master Luke Skywalker hashtagged #EvenMyGoosebumpsHave Goosebumps after watching a scoring sesh. No surprise there: after Michael Giacchino's *Rogue One* music, John Williams returned for *Ep. VIII* to score whatever Rey-velations await us. After the layered reworkings of already-iconic themes in that full-bombast trailer, our goosebumps have scaled porg-ish proportions.



OLAF'S FROZEN ADVENTURE

RRP £7.29 various

Disney sledges ever-closer to *Frozen 2* with Olaf's 21-minute solo outing, screening with *Coco*. After 2015's one-song *Frozen Fever*, the summer-lovin' snow-cutie's seasonal lark has been deemed worthy of four new songs from Elyssa Samsel and Kate Anderson ('When We're Together' is fiendishly catchy), enough to secure a release. Also included are a score suite and karaoke mixes: ear muffs at the ready.



BARB-RABILIA

RRP £Various target.com

From books to mugs ('Never forget'), there's no end of ways to celebrate the most meme-d minor character in recent television history.



GAME OF THRONES MOTHER OF DRAGONS CHAIN

RRP £2,799 hbostore.co.uk

You might need to make a date with the Iron Bank of Braavos before considering this luxury item, a sterling silver reproduction of Daenerys' killer accessory. Forty inches long, it's the exact length worn by Emilia Clarke in Season 7.



STRANGER THINGS EGGO CARD GAME

RRP £12 target.com

Forget Trivial Pursuit, Monopoly or strip Pictionary; this is the game the cool kids will be playing this holiday season. The aim of the game is threefold: escape the Upside Down; get rid of all your Eggo cards; avoid becoming the Demogorgon's lunch.



TOTAL FILM MUST HAVE ★★★★★

TV GOLD

...And solid silver too. Check out this range o' things (geddit?)...

STRANGER THINGS SEASON 1 COLLECTOR'S EDITION

RRP £20 target.com

★ Watch your loved ones' faces go into WTF overdrive when they discover you've bought them... a videotape?!? Surprise! Inside the lovingly weathered '80s-style box is a Blu-ray and DVD of the first season of Netflix's breakout hit. Wonder how many Christmases will pass before we're giving gifts in 'retro' Blu-ray boxes?



SOPRANOS SHOT GLASS

RRP £7.99 hbostore.co.uk

'Bada Bing' being not only the show's fictional strip club, but a phrase immortalised by Sonny Corleone. Double gangster-geek points!

GOT 3D MASK AND WALL MOUNT

RRP £17.98 hbostore.co.uk

Pledge your allegiance to one of Westeros' noble – or ignoble – houses with 3D renderings you can mount on the wall or your own head. There's also a White Walker if you're more of an 'outdoors' type.



SAVE UP TO 49%

LAST BUT NOT LEAST...

Don't forget the gift that keeps giving – a subscription to *Total Film* or one of our sibling titles. Save up to 49 per cent on a subscription this Christmas – see **page 36**

SAVE UP TO 49%


"In case I don't see you, good afternoon, good evening and good night."

good counsel

STILL SETTING THE BAR FOR PREQUELS...

BETTER CALL SAUL S3 *TBC*

SHOW ★★★★★ EXTRAS *N/A*

2017 **OUT 27 NOVEMBER** DVD, BD **EXTRAS** TBC

When *Breaking Bad* creator Vince Gilligan committed to making a spin-off prequel dedicated to Walter White's shyster lawyer Saul Goodman (Bob Odenkirk), he envisaged a comedy. It instead came out as a tragedy. This superlative third season continues to track, methodically and mercilessly, the transformation of James 'Jimmy' McGill into *Breaking Bad*'s Saul.

Season 2, you might recall, concluded with older brother Chuck (Michael McKean) recording Jimmy admitting that he'd tampered with legal documents. Now Chuck takes the tape to court, a move that threatens the new legal practice established by Jimmy and Kim (Rhea Seehorn). Ex-cop Mike Ehrmantraut (Jonathan Banks), meanwhile, continues his own path towards becoming everyone's favourite enforcer/assassin as he launches an investigation that leads him to *Breaking Bad*'s Gus Fring (Giancarlo Esposito).

With its meticulous framing, slooow-burn plotting and forensic attention to relationships, *Better Call Saul* proves the devil is in the details as it mulls biblical themes of vengeance and Good versus Evil. Lingering here, scrutinising there, it unblinkingly observes its characters going about their daily tasks, and fastidiously fashions thrills designed to shake souls rather than pump hearts.

As good as *Breaking Bad*? Possibly. One of the best shows on TV right now? Absolutely. ***Jamie Graham***



THE BLACKLIST: REDEMPTION *15*

SHOW ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★☆☆☆

2017 **OUT NOW** DVD **EXTRAS** Deleted scenes, Featurette

With its episodic spy missions and mysterious parent issues, this spin-off follows the exact template of its originating show. This time, Tom (Ryan Eggold) signs on to work for a military company run by his maybe-or-maybe-not mother Scottie (Famke Janssen) while secretly reporting back to supposed-to-be-dead father Howard (Terry O'Quinn). The covert operations are more entertaining than the generic setup deserves, but the larger plot fails to anchor this now-cancelled, mostly forgettable series. ***Matt Looker***



HOUSE OF CARDS: SEASON 5 *15*

SHOW ★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★☆☆☆☆

2017 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD **EXTRAS** None

A protracted, contested election dominates the fifth season of Netflix's popular political saga, one that allows Kevin Spacey's Machiavellian president and Robin Wright's equally devious first lady/veep to cohabit the Oval Office while *RoboCop*'s Joel Kinnaman waits testily in the wings. Patricia Clarkson and Campbell Scott (as Jane Davis and Mark Usher) bring additional star power to a show whose intrigue continues to absorb even when it reaches peak preposterous. A climactic reversal, though, suggests this drawn-out DC power tussle may be finally reaching its endgame. ***Neil Smith***



RIVIERA *15*

SHOW ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★☆☆☆☆

2017 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD **EXTRAS** None

Created by director Neil Jordan (*Interview With The Vampire*) and co-written by Booker Prize winner John Banville, this sultry, glamorous and sun-soaked mystery drama is hampered by too-soapy plot twists. Julia Stiles stars as Georgina Clios, a young art curator whose billionaire husband (Anthony LaPaglia) is killed in a suspicious yacht explosion. Every scene is dripping in wealth, as Georgina contends with family secrets and business revelations in the aftermath, but such riches can't hide the trashy, sensationalist storytelling at work. ***Matt Looker***



The gang are unimpressed to find the Eggo cupboard bare.

ON DEMAND

back in time

NOSTALGIC FAVE KEEPS THINGS COMFORTABLE...

STRANGER THINGS 2 *15*

SHOW ★★★☆☆

AVAILABLE NOW NETFLIX

Is Eleven alive? What's wrong with Will? Can there ever be #JusticeForBarb? It's fair to say that, after *Stranger Things* burst on to Netflix in 2016 with its catnip combo of '80s cool and King-ian chills, expectations for Season 2 were stacked higher than a plateful of Eggos. But of all the questions giving fans nosebleeds, the biggest was: could creators the Duffer brothers perform the same nostalgia trick twice?

With a slightly extended run of nine episodes, as opposed to the first season's eight, there's plenty of room for them to explore and expand their world. It's both a relief and a disappointment that the emphasis this time round remains firmly on the characters. Like the fans, the Duffers have fallen in love with their creations, and the interplay between them is as joyously warm as ever – particularly as Lucas (Caleb McLaughlin) and Dustin (Gaten Matarazzo) fight over hot-headed newcomer Max (Sadie Sink, exceptional).

This season's opener, meanwhile, hints at grander, if not necessarily *stranger*, ambitions as a van of punks are pursued by cops in Pittsburgh, only evading them via mysterious means. Although hinting at a world primed for expansion, this prologue is ultimately a bluff – the rest of *ST2* plays out almost exclusively in Hawkins, where Will (Noah Schnapp) is suffering from PTSD, Sheriff Hopper (David Harbour) is investigating rotting pumpkin fields, Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown) is delving into her past, and the Hawkins Lab remains very much operational.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

ALIENS *1986*
Swap demogorgons for xenomorphs and *ST2* could have been exec-produced by James Cameron.

FREAKS & GEEKS *1999-2000*
High schoolers attempt to fit in with the cool kids in a short-lived diamond.

IT *2017*
More '80s scares, plus *ST*'s Finn Wolfhard, in this blockbuster King adap.

Strange things are still afoot, but this season's supernatural elements feel like afterthoughts; props for the increasingly soapy, screamy character arcs. One of *ST2*'s only genuine surprises is that it's less King, more Cameron. Will's lightning-crackling visions of an enormous, many-legged monster recalls *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, but the season's monstrous imagery draws almost exclusively from *Aliens* – including an extended demogorgon biology lesson.

The pacing drags, though, and perhaps most alarmingly, the show's overall plot barely progresses in any meaningful way. *Stranger Things 2* is a backwards-looking season that mostly functions as an extended Season 1 epilogue. "Nothing about this is OK!" screams one character in the finale. We won't go quite that far, especially when the Duffers so deftly balance dewy-eyed nostalgia (*Ghostbusters*, Bon Jovi) with such loveable characters. Sadly, though, *ST2* takes few risks. It's fun, familiar, but stops short of turning its world Upside Down. ***Josh Winning***

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MUDBOUND *15*

FILM ★★★★☆

AVAILABLE 17 NOVEMBER | NETFLIX

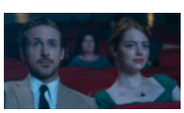
Generating Oscar buzz since its Sundance premiere, Dee Rees' drama is a shrewd addition to Netflix's 2017 slate and proof of its interest in distinctive directorial voices.

The story revolves around two families in 1940s Mississippi. Ambitious farmer Henry McAllan (Jason Clarke) drags wife Laura (Carey Mulligan) and racist dad 'Pappy' (Jonathan Banks) to the tract of land he's bought, only to realise he's been duped into owning a worthless quagmire. That leads to an uneasy relationship with their neighbours, black tenant farmers Hap and Florence Jackson (Rob Morgan, Mary J. Blige), which intensifies when the Jacksons' son Ronsel (Jason Mitchell) returns from war at the same time as fellow veteran – and Henry's brother – Jamie (Garrett Hedlund).

While the plot follows a conventional, if powerful, path, Rees tackles big themes – poverty, racism, masculinity – with compassion and insight. There's a touch of Malick in the ruminative mood and overlapping narrators; given the story's intercutting between the farm and WW2 combat, it often plays like a hybrid of *Days Of Heaven* and *The Thin Red Line*.

Yet Malick was never so overtly political. The mud becomes a metaphor for how bigotry festers when minds are closed to growth, but Rees offers a slim wedge of hope – and change – through the broadened horizons of education and travel. It's a timely parable for today's troubled America, aided by exceptional performances, especially from rising star Mitchell and a never-better Hedlund. ***Simon Kinnear***

HELPING HAND Jamie McAllan (Garrett Hedlund) reaches out to the Jacksons (Mary J. Blige and Rob Morgan).

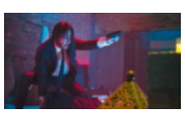


LA LA LAND *12*

★★★★★★

NOW | NETFLIX

The most successful musical since *Mamma Mia!* but without any cheese – even when Ryan Gosling's giving it some on the keytar, one highlight in a movie that's got more than there are stars in the city, shining just for you. Apols for the earworm.

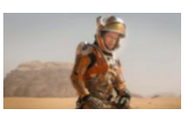


JOHN WICK *15*

★★★★★☆

21 NOV | NETFLIX

Keanu Reeves re-cements his action cred in a shoot-'em-up that blends unforgiving gun-fu with a dash of heart (RIP puppy) and stylish world-building; the villains-only Continental Hotel may be the coolest rest-stop you'd never want to check into.



THE MARTIAN *12*

★★★★☆☆

NOW | NETFLIX

Ridley Scott's Matt Damon-headed sci-fi is remarkable for its lack of contrived threat or antagonism; even faeces is Damo's friend as he ingeniously learns to survive on the Red Planet with every means at his, um, disposal. Next stop, Poo-piter!

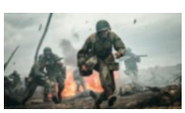


THE GREAT WALL *12*

★★☆☆☆

17 NOV | SKY

More Damon, albeit in less enthralling circumstances. Still, if you missed it in the cinema, there's (some) monster fun to be had as archers and acrobats attempt to repel ancient wall-scaling beasties. Shaky storytelling, solid visuals.



HACKSAW RIDGE *15*

★★★★★☆

22 NOV | NETFLIX

Easily the most violent film ever made about a pacifist, Mel Gibson's study of real-life conscientious objector Desmond Doss packs a sizeable wallop, both to the gut and the heart. Andrew Garfield is medal-worthy as Doss.

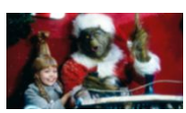


TRADING PLACES *15*

★★★★★☆

NOW | SKY

Delightful '80s take on *The Prince And The Pauper*, in which the prince (broker Dan Aykroyd) becomes a suicidal Santa and the pauper (hustler Eddie Murphy) says f... a lot. Jamie Lee Curtis and Denholm Elliott steal every scene they can.



THE GRINCH *PG*

★★★★☆☆

NOW | SKY

Jim Carrey is both unrecognisable *and* unmistakable as Dr. Seuss' Christmas-thieving curmudgeon. OK, the '66 cartoon version is better overall, but you don't get any deranged Sean Connery impersonations in that one, so...



ON LOCATION

tech noir

ON SET WITH BLACK MIRROR'S CINEMATIC FOURTH SEASON...

This February, Iceland was covered by 51cm of snow overnight. *Small Screen* is acutely aware of this because we're currently shin-deep in white stuff outside the Icelandic equivalent of Oscar Isaac's future house in *Ex Machina*. Most filmmakers would call it a day in the face of such adverse conditions, but John Hillcoat – director of *The Road* and outback western *The Proposition* – thrives in extreme environments. "It's very humbling because it's a constant reminder of how powerful nature is," the Aussie director smiles, cradling a cup of coffee. "It adds an energy. The world is right in front of you, and you have to deal with it."

Deal with it is exactly what the crew of 'Crocodile' are doing, with filming on hold while everyone with a free pair of hands wrangles hoses of steaming water. The third episode to go before cameras for the fourth season of Charlie Brooker's techno-terror anthology series *Black Mirror*, 'Crocodile' is set predominantly in the ultra-isolated, super-modern abode of Andrea Riseborough's Mia, a successful architect sporting a peroxide-blonde pixie cut. It's the setting for a Scandi-inflected thriller about a woman pushed to extremes when a terrible secret from her past come backs to haunt her.

The *Black Mirror* twist? It's set in a world where a device can be used to access your "raw impression of events" – including by insurance companies to approve claims. It's in this capacity that Shazza (Kiran Sonia Sawar) has arrived at Mia's house. After using the device, which resembles a chunky portable TV from the '80s, Shazza swiftly heads to her car, perturbed by what the machine has shown her. "Got everything you need?" asks Mia from behind, fretfully. "Sometimes I have mad thoughts…"

REMEMBER THIS

The mad thoughts of Charlie Brooker, writer of all of Season 4's six episodes, are the reason we're here today. 'Crocodile' finds the series back on familiar ground by playing on memory, albeit from a different angle. "It's all about how inaccurate our memory really is," Hillcoat says. "Rather than 'The Entire History Of You' where perfect memories were captured by a camera implanted in the neck, this is more like where memories are dreams."

Hillcoat's films often exist in a murky moral grey zone, so it's little surprise he felt an affinity for Brooker's dark vision of the future. Riseborough too was attracted by the prospect of playing a dubious figure. "Originally, the part I'm playing was a man," Riseborough reveals, perched on the end of her character's bed. "When I suggested I play the man's part there were concerns that people wouldn't have sympathy for a woman; there would be more judgement. And I said, 'That's exactly why we should do it.'"

With Jodie Foster, Colm McCarthy and David Slade also directing episodes in Season 4, *Black Mirror* has lost none of its knack for attracting big-screen talent. "What's great about the format of *Black Mirror* is that they're complete one-offs, so I've approached it from a cinematic

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CROCODILE BLUES
Filming in Iceland with director John Hillcoat.







MIRROR IMAGES
(above, clockwise from top) 'Arkangel', 'Black Museum' and 'Hang The DJ'.

MEMORY LANE
(below) Andrea Riseborough as Mia in 'Crocodile'.

'THE MATERIAL IN TV GOT MORE AND MORE INTERESTING AS MOVIES STARTED TO GET LESS INTERESTING'

JOHN HILLCOAT

level," Hillcoat says. "Generally, the mature audience has been overlooked by the film industry. The material in TV got more and more interesting as movies started to get less interesting; that's what sparked my interest as a filmmaker."

SHOW-STOPPING

Describing each season as being "like a little film festival", Brooker says S4 will go further than ever before in terms of the "wider variety of tones". Good news after the Emmy-winning success of 'San Junipero' – *Black Mirror*'s first 'hopeful' yarn. "['*San Junipero*'] was a story where I was deliberately refitting what I thought *Black Mirror* was," he says. "It's extremely gratifying that people have enjoyed it, because it's expanded what this show is."

Something else new for S4: Brooker has changed his stance on the interconnectedness of his stories. "When people used to ask me, 'Are these all set in the same universe?', I'd go, 'No,'" he recalls. "But now explicitly some of them are. There are nods and winks, and sometimes direct references to things." As for the future, Brooker rules out the big screen – but there is a book of short stories on the way, while "games and comics are two worlds that I've thought about", he confirms. "But it would have to be right." ***Jordan Farley***

BLACK MIRROR SEASON 4 COMES TO NETFLIX THIS DECEMBER.

shattered glass

Charlie Brooker frames the rest of Season 4...

ARKANGEL

Director: Jodie Foster

"[*Jodie*] was instrumental in giving [*Arkangel*] an indie movie sensibility and that feel. She was attracted to the main dynamic going on in that story, a mother/daughter thing. She had lots of opinions, and so the script changed quite a lot."

HANG THE DJ

Director: Tim Van Patten

"It's about a system. It's one of the more playful episodes we've done," says Brooker. Producer Annabel Jones adds, "It's pertinent to the contemporary dating scene. There's quite a lot of sex in it – not a huge amount, but who's complaining?"

USS CALLISTER

Director: Toby Haynes

"Callister is the longest episode this year, about 74 minutes. It was actually on set for one of the episodes of the previous season that I started discussing the idea of a *Star Trek* pastiche. It's a tale of the unexpected."

METALHEAD

Director: David Slade

"That will hopefully provoke a strong reaction from people. The whole thing is black and white. It's fair to say that it's unsettling. You might go as far as to say 'terrifying'. If you liked 'White Bear', you'll probably like 'Metalhead'."

BLACK MUSEUM

Director: Colm McCarthy

"That's a 'Treehouse of Horror'-style portmanteau, three stories in one. Letitia Wright plays a character who shows up at a crime museum, which is full of grizzly artefacts, and there's a story attached to each one. We turned on a big Easter egg hose with that episode."





Sometimes there really are monsters in your bedroom.

ON LOCATION

missing links

SHEDDING LIGHT ON NETFLIX'S NEW MYSTERY SERIES, DARK...

1 IT'S ABOUT MISSING CHILDREN

Set in the fictional town of Winden, *Dark* follows four families as they try to solve the mystery of two missing children. Written by husband and wife duo Baran bo Odar and Jantje Friese (*Who Am I*), it's a brooding examination of small-town secrets. "All those teenagers, parents and grandparents alike are somehow connected to that disappearance," says Friese. "And as the crime plot kicks in during the first episodes, and everyone tries to find out what really happened, we begin to understand that all of those families have some sins hidden in their cellars."

2 IT'S NOT ABOUT WHO OR HOW...

...It's about *when*. The disappearance of the children is not a straightforward mystery, but part of something stranger: a supernatural phenomenon that bends time and space. "Those family secrets," says Friese, "not only happen in the now, but reach back into the '80s and the '50s. It's a puzzle. And in every episode you get more pieces of the puzzle and start to connect the dots." If there is a lead, then it is probably Louis Hofmann as the withdrawn Jonah. But in all, the three timelines rack up a character count of 42.

3 IT'S NOT A STRANGER THINGS REHASH

A new Netflix show set in a small town, centred on missing children and a supernatural mystery... the parallels are obvious. But according to Friese, "When we first heard about *Stranger Things* we were already done with the scripts. We watched it and of course we were like, 'There are some similarities,' but *Dark* is not that similar. Those [*small-town*] themes seem to be hanging in the air at the moment. Stephen King, Steven Spielberg, *Twin Peaks*... that generation is making films now. It's in our DNA."

4 IT'S, WELL, DARK

Tonally, *Dark* is closer to Nordic noir – moody and atmospheric, with occasional flashes of supernatural horror. It's a tone that the pair were eager to command and control, hence Odar's decision to direct all 10 episodes himself. "I was scared," he says, "because I read an article about Cary Joji Fukunaga who did all eight episodes of *True Detective* and said afterwards he wanted to go to a mental institution. What happens to someone who does *10*? It was brutal, but the beauty was that by directing every scene it allowed the actors to develop a character over six months."

5 IT'S A NEW HORIZON FOR NETFLIX

The streaming service has begun to produce shows catered to specific countries; *Dark* is Germany's first. But according to Friese, it's a risky endeavour in a culture where realism rules. "There's an idea in Germany that you can't go over the top," he says. "And so genres have a difficult time in terms of believability. With *Dark*, we tell something which is not real because it's supernatural, but we do it in a very grounded way. We're bringing the two sides together – hopefully!" ***Stephen Kelly***

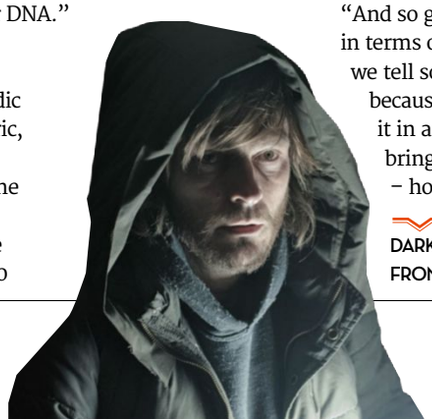
DARK IS AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX FROM 1 DECEMBER.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

TWIN PEAKS
1990-2017
Lynch lovers will be stoked to know there's a supernatural forest in *Dark*.

THE KILLING
2007-2012
It may be German, but *Dark* shares plenty with classic Nordic noir.

STRANGER THINGS
2016-PRESENT
Dark's tonally grittier, but it'll satisfy fans of the '80s-tastic show.



EDITED BY MATT MAYTUM











TOTAL FILM BUFF

CINEMA CELEBRATED AND DEBATED. BOOSTING YOUR MOVIE GENIUS TO SUPERHERO LEVELS...









this issue

SPACE BALLS
LEGENDARY LIP FOLIAGE
STONY-FACED
COOL COATS
GREAT SCOTT
CHASING KEVIN SMITH
TRAIN-ING DAY
OFF THE 'TRACKS
SUITED AND BOOTED

INVESTIGATION

IS IT BOLLOCKS?

Film Buff investigates the facts behind outlandish movie plots.

THIS MONTH **SANDRA BULLOCK'S FIRE EXTINGUISHER PROPULSION IN GRAVITY.**



Q In *Gravity*, Dr. Ryan Stone (Sandra Bullock) travels through space using a fire extinguisher as a thruster. Would that actually work if you happened to be stranded in space?

A **DR. GEMMA LAVENDER**, PHD IN ASTROPHYSICS, EDITOR OF ALL ABOUT SPACE

Yes and no. While it's true that you can use a fire extinguisher as a kind of handheld jetpack as Bullock does in a bid to reach China's Tiangong-1, being able to control which direction she was moving in through space would have been much trickier than how it's portrayed.

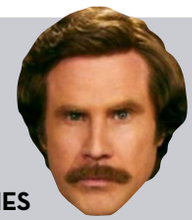
As a general rule, whenever mass – in this case, the carbon dioxide – is ejected in one direction, momentum causes the remaining mass (the extinguisher) to move in the opposite direction. Bullock was allowing highly pressurised gas to escape, creating something similar to when a rocket launches from the ground here on Earth.

Bullock's character uses it to change her altitude at high speed – a manoeuvre that requires a lot of energy that's not possible to get out of a canister of compressed gas. Bullock successfully propelled herself in the direction she wanted to go, but the extinguisher would have needed to have been at her centre of mass for her to propel herself the way she did – tricky to obtain in her situation. In reality, she would have been thrown off balance and spun around much more.

VERDICT MOSTLY BOLLOCKS

Want us to investigate if a movie scenario is bollocks? Ask us at totalfilm@futurenet.com

ALTERNATIVE BOX OFFICE



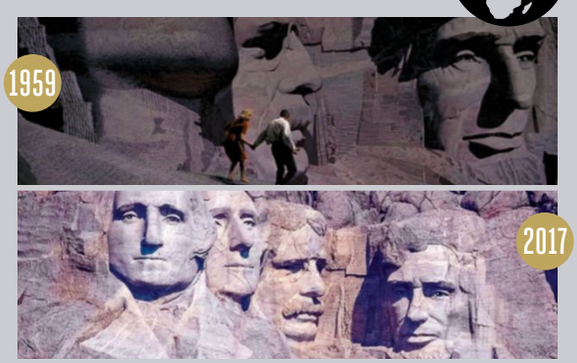
THE BIGGEST MOVIES...
FEATURING REALLY BIG 'TACHES



1. **DR. SEUSS' THE LORAX** 2012 ..... $348.8M
2. **HOOK** 1991 ..... $300.9M
3. **BORAT** 2006 ..... $261.6M
4. **PULP FICTION** 1994 ..... $213.9M
5. **GANGS OF NEW YORK** 2002 ..... $193.8M
6. **ANCHORMAN 2: THE LEGEND CONTINUES** 2013 ..... $173.6M
7. **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN** 2007 ..... $171.6M
8. **3 MEN AND A BABY** 1987 ..... $167.8M (US)
9. **DODGEBALL: A TRUE UNDERDOG STORY** 2004 ..... $167.7M
10. **ANCHORMAN: THE LEGEND OF RON BURGUNDY** 2004 ..... $90.6M

ON LOCATION

REEL SPOTS BEHIND THE CAMERA



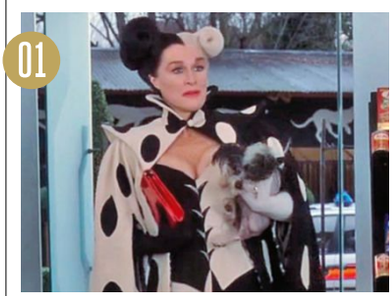
WHAT? The finale chase in Hitchcock's *North By Northwest* crosses the famous mountainside sculpted with the fizzogs of ex-presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln, though only the establishing shots were shot on location.
WHERE? Mount Rushmore, Keystone, South Dakota.
GO? You can visit all year round. Go now, before *Superman II* baddies redo it. ***Thanks to L. Christensen***

Snapped yourself at a film location? Send us the details at totalfilm@futurenet.com

TOP 10

MOVIE COATS

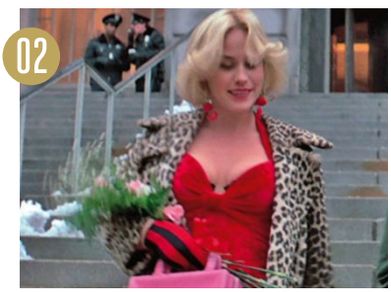
If jackets are your jam...



01

102 DALMATIONS

Cruella de Vil's puppy-pelt luxury item was brought to glorious life (or should that be death?) by costume designers Anthony Powell and Rosemary Burrows in Disney's 2000 live-actioner follow-up. The fierce look was completed by Glenn Close's rottweiler grin.



02

TRUE ROMANCE

Lover-on-the-(g)lam Alabama Whitman (Patricia Arquette) clashes punk, retro and casual styles with her bright colours and animal prints. The pony-print mini-skirt rocks, but best of the garish garments is her leopard (faux) fur coat, so striking it's back in fashion.

TAXI DRIVER

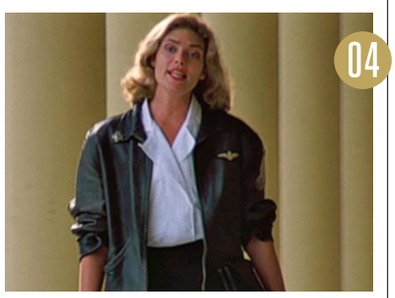
Ex-Marine Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro) wears an army surplus field jacket covered in badges as he preps himself for his final mission – killing a senator. Loose and lived-in, this M-65 jacket screams alienation while its baggy sleeves accommodate Travis' sliding-gun rig.



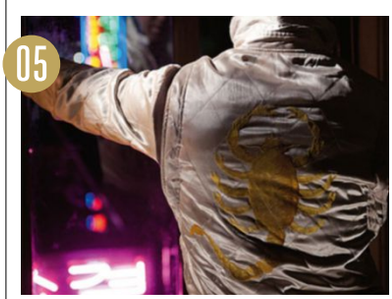
03

TOP GUN

Maverick's G-1 jacket is a thing of beauty, but it's the shabby bomber worn by Kelly McGillis' instructor Charlie, with its viscose lining and rolled-up sleeves, that wins our affections – and adds weight to Tarantino's gay sub-plot theory expounded in *Sleep With Me*.



04



05

DRIVE

Ryan Gosling's wheelman is a man of very few words, but his silk jacket – embroidered with a scorpion, no less – speaks volumes. The market was promptly flooded with poor imitations but there's only one authentic version, designed especially for the movie.



06

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE

Dead at 24, James Dean made just three movies, but his impact on popular culture is immense. Look up 'icon' in the dictionary and you'd not be surprised to see a picture of Dean in his Jim Stark red blouson jacket.

FIGHT CLUB

I am Jack's dressed-to-kill id... The Narrator's alter ego, Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt), wears a single-breasted rust-red leather jacket with white double-stitching. Ironically, many companies started trading their own replicas after the movie's release.



07

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Great Scott! Forget the size-changing jacket in *Back To The Future Part II* – you can't beat the blend of cool and innocence that comes with Marty McFly's (Michael J. Fox) red puffer gilet worn over a blue-denim jacket.



08



09

THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO

Noomi Rapace was perfection as the original Lisbeth Salander aka The Girl With The Ace Leather Jacket. With its stud collar, diagonal zipper and open hem cuffs, it renders her oh-so-cool. And warm.



10

QUADROPHENIA

As sported by Brighton-bound '60s Mod Jimmy (Phil Daniels), this fishtail parka is oversized to protect his red mohair suit. It's a good job his beloved scooter boasts 10 mirrors – if you looked this good, you'd want to admire yourself from every possible angle. *JG*

THE BIG SHOT

BLADE RUNNER'S GLITTERING CITYSCAPE

Just before the Voight-Kampff test. Just after the opening crawl and 'LOS ANGELES, NOVEMBER 2019' card. Vangelis' twinkly synth score lifts the curtain on a future LA that was nicknamed 'Hades' landscape' by the crew who created it. It's not hard to see why. A darkly glittering panorama that belches fire, it seems to be a living thing that would devour you as soon as look at you. "When I close my eyes, I can still see that opening sequence," said Philip K. Dick, who saw the first 20 minutes of *Blade Runner* before his untimely death. "It's like being transported to the ultimate city of the future, with all the good things and all the bad things about it."

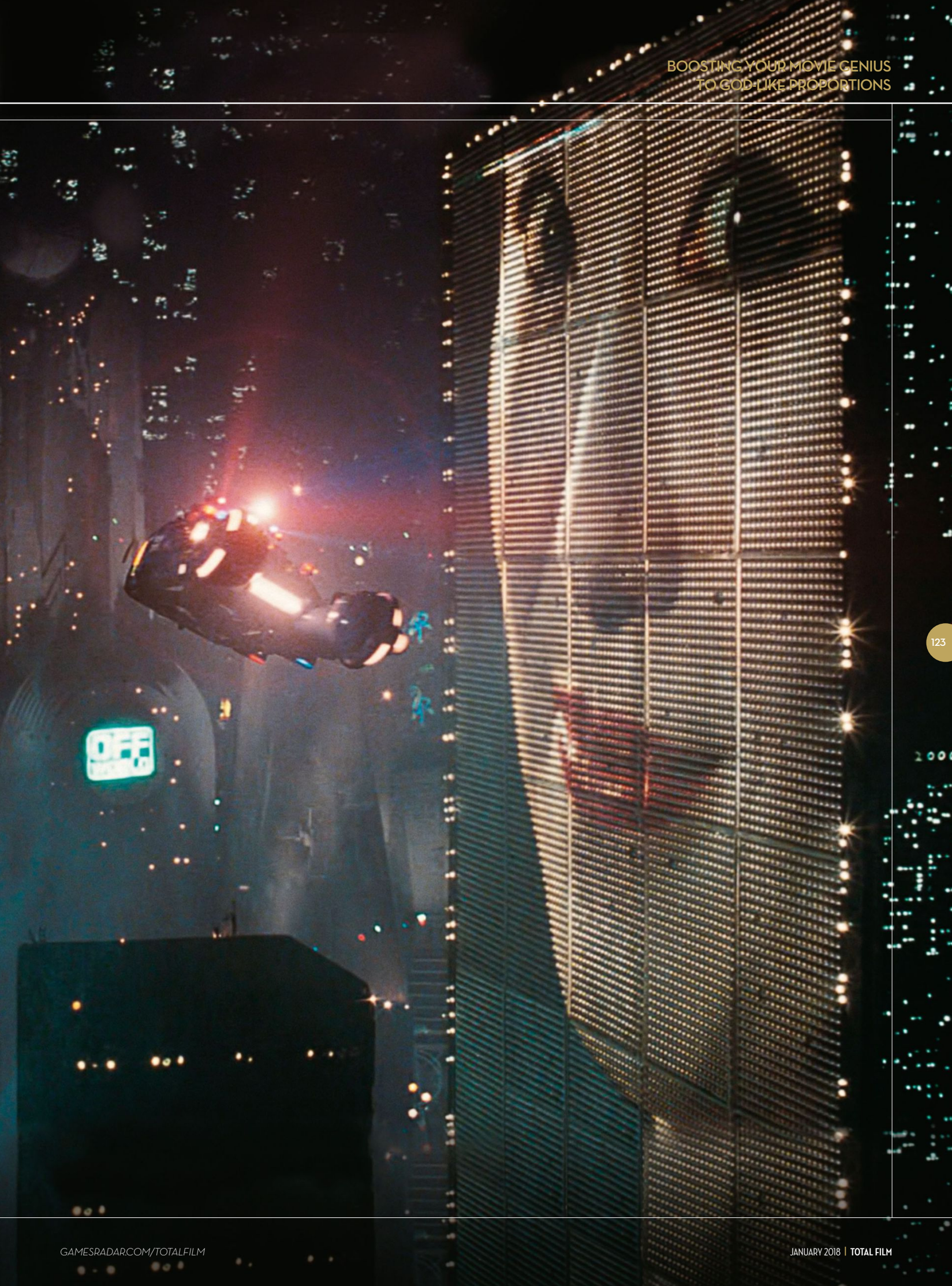
It's difficult to believe that it was just a 13 by 18-foot miniature built on a plywood table. The task of creating the LA of the future for Ridley Scott's defining sci-fi fell to special effects supervisor Douglas Trumbull. Along with his crew at Entertainment Effects Group in Marina del Rey, California, he crafted thousands of brass cutouts, all inspired by '80s photos of oppressive industrial skylines. Stacked in rows and etched with detail, they created the illusion of a vast skyline.

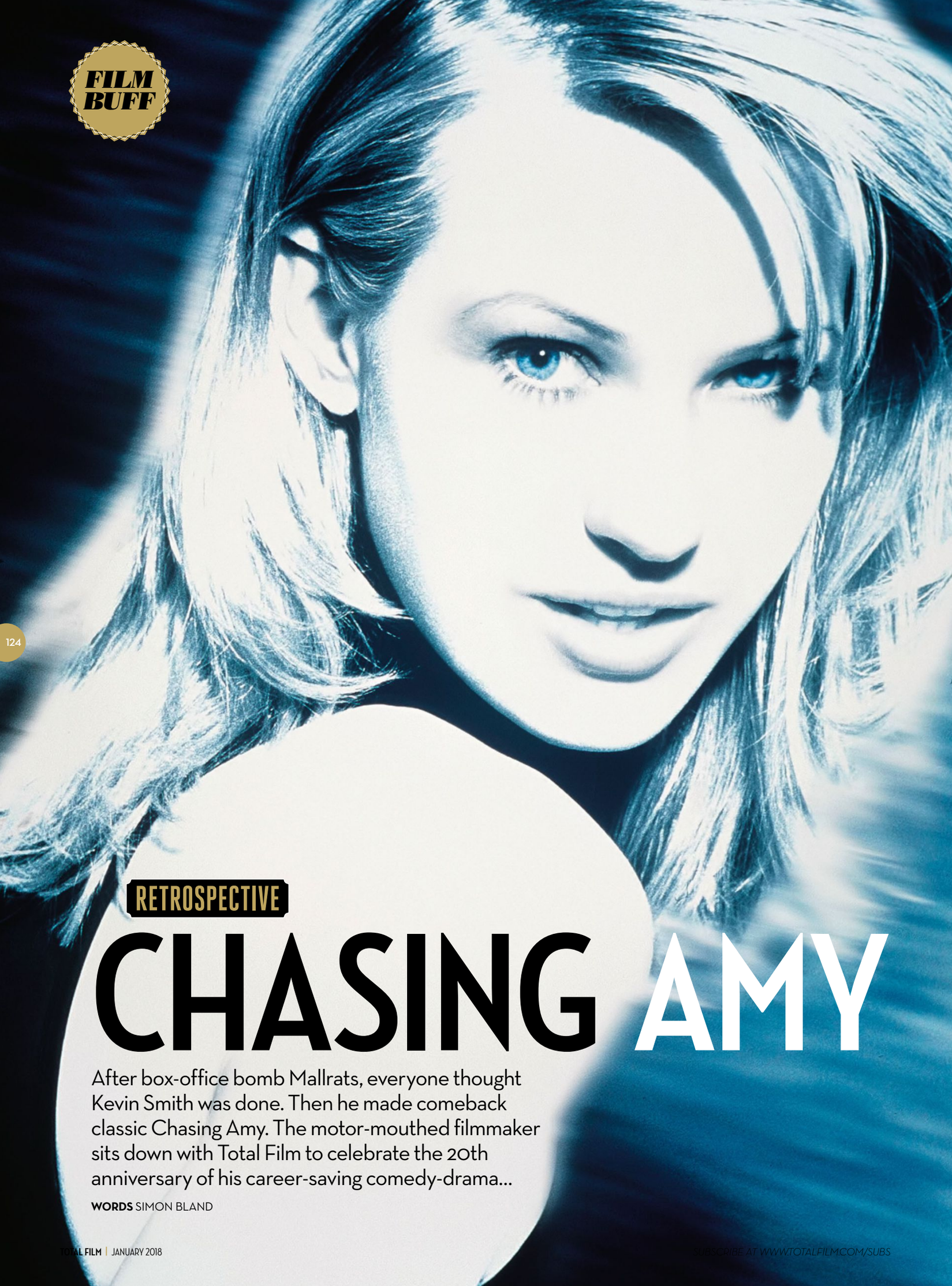
Seven miles of fibre optics and 20,000 lights powered the landscape, necessitating fans to help keep the studio from burning up. A smoke machine, meanwhile, wreathed the model in a noir-ish mist to give a sense of depth, and the flaming pylons were shot under cover of night in a car park.

Scott himself has described the film's backdrop as "industrial imperialism"; a dystopian world "run and owned by three corporations". That sense of suffocating industrialisation is all over this sequence, not least in the super-close-up image of an eye, in which the city lights and fiery torrents are reflected and distorted.

"I literally came out in a state of shock," recalled Philip K. Dick of the footage he saw. Yes, and this was only the beginning... *JW*

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RETROSPECTIVE

CHASING AMY

After box-office bomb Mallrats, everyone thought Kevin Smith was done. Then he made comeback classic Chasing Amy. The motor-mouthed filmmaker sits down with Total Film to celebrate the 20th anniversary of his career-saving comedy-drama...

WORDS SIMON BLAND

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Before starting *Chasing Amy*, I was in the same place I'd find myself in for the rest of my career," recalls writer, director, podcaster and all-round chatty man Kevin Smith. "You make something people like – 'Hurray!' Make something people don't like? 'You're finished!'"

Such was the situation back in '96 when a 27-year-old Smith started work on his third film, a romcom love triangle between comic-book men Holden (Ben Affleck) and Banky (Jason Lee) and lesbian Alyssa (Joey Lauren Adams). "We were flavour of the month indie-kids with *Clerks*, then *Mallrats* died a thousand deaths at the box office and we were ground zero," he admits. "We were kind of considered done."

Well, not quite. It was at this point that Smith surprised people with a sharp left turn. While his first foray into Universal's big studio world proved to be Kryptonite to punters and critics alike, the New Jersey filmmaker regarded this stumble as a make-or-break opportunity rather than a Hulk-sized failure. He'd recently inked a deal with Weinstein hit-machine Miramax (note: news of Harvey Weinstein's alleged sexual harrassment broke after Smith did this interview; Smith has since tweeted, "He financed the first 14 years of my career – it makes me feel ashamed") and was ready to embark on his most personal work yet.

"My friend and producer Scott Mosier was very tight with Gwen Turner, writer of the movie *Go Fish*, which played at Sundance the same year as *Clerks*," Smith tells *Total Film*.



SEXUAL TENSION (top) Carmen Llywelyn, Joey Lauren Adams, Jason Lee and Ben Affleck as the awkward foursome; (below) Kevin Smith on set with Affleck.



REX

"Their movie was about lesbians, our movie was about two dudes who love each other, would never fuck, but probably should, so they were very much in the same spirit," he says. "I was like 'Dude, you're in love with this girl! You should write a movie about this. Write a movie about a straight guy who falls in love with a lesbian.'"

When Mosier didn't bite, Smith forged ahead with the screenplay himself, and first bounced the concept off *Mallrats*' producer Jim Jacks. "I told Jim and he goes, 'Do it like *Clueless*. Set it in high school. That's the movie to model after, they're breaking through!'" explains Smith. "So I started writing and had about 12 pages of *Chasing Amy* set in a high school."

Ultimately, the school idea was ditched for a more mature approach. "If you look at *Chasing Amy*, there's this subplot of Holden and Banky torn between commercial and artistic instincts," says Smith. "Believe me, I'm no Aronofsky. I can't say it as beautifully as *mother!* but there was an allegorical attempt at expressing, 'Who do I be for the rest of my life? This studio guy who makes stuff everyone loves, or do I stay true to my artistic voice that got us here?'"

As per usual with Smith's work, personal inspirations began creeping in. "Back in '96, I was still the same guy I was in high school relationships – the motherfucker who's jealous," he admits. "It was, 'Who'd you date before me? How big's his dick?' All that stupid immature shit. I'd never seen a flick address male sexual self-esteem or the guy who doesn't think he's good enough so I started writing *Chasing Amy* as a therapeutic exercise and damn it if at the end of writing that script I hadn't changed." he chuckles. "By the time I'd finished the movie, I didn't even recognise that version of myself."

BATMAN BEGINS

Progressing with a shoestring budget, Smith, Mosier and their cast experienced few hiccups bar a minor film stock issue ("That footage you see during the 'we all got to sleep together' scene? That's the only footage that exists, there are no alternate takes"). And now, as *Justice League* looms on the horizon, the writer-director's keen to point out that it was on *Chasing Amy* that he introduced Affleck to a key text: "That's where he first read *The Dark Knight Returns*," he beams.

Twenty years on, he's still grinning, for *Chasing Amy* did exactly what he set out to do – return with a statement, twang viewers' heartstrings and solidify his position as a fan favourite.

"Even if you weren't gay or a guy who fell in love with a gay woman, everybody understands relationships," he shrugs. "It was a new variation on an old theme, and the time to do that was in my twenties – that's when you make your grand statement. I fear the next time I make something like *Chasing Amy,* because it'll come from some fucking sad place." He takes a rare pause. "*Chasing Amy* saved my film career, and I probably won't make a movie that gets a reaction like that for the rest of my life. And that's fine. You know how many people don't get any? I'm happy with the fucking one."

CHASING AMY IS AVAILABLE ON DVD AND BD.



CLASSIC SCENE

SPIDER-MAN 2

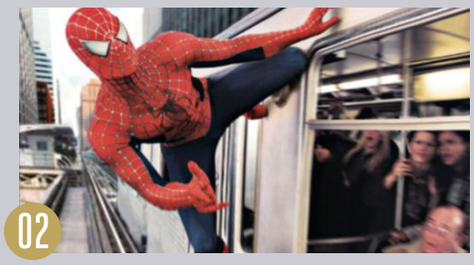
Riding the rails...



01

CHICAGO WITH IT

Spidey and Doctor Octopus tussle on the train. As elevated trains were no longer running in Manhattan, 16 cameras shot Chicago's Loop in 2002, just five months after Sam Raimi's first *Spider-Man* opened. The script wasn't ready and principal photography wouldn't start for another six months.



02

GRAVITY CALLS

The FX team were tasked with conveying the environment's effects (wind, shaking train) on the fighters' bodies. After the characters were CG-animated, stars Tobey Maguire and Alfred Molina were redeployed to give the sense of "having to stabilise themselves", explains animation director Anthony LaMolinara.



03

RIDING IN CARS

Along with effects director John Frazier's soundstage train mock-ups, the scene was achieved through the integration of 100-plus VFX shots, live-action Chicago/NYC plates and more. Effects designer John Dykstra calls it "a giant mix 'n' match", effects producer Lydia Bottegoni "a continuity nightmare".



04

RIDE ON TIME

Spidey slows the hurtling train. When the initial idea to have the train thunder off-track was ditched, Maguire faced what he calls his "toughest" sequence. While he acted out Spidey's struggles in strenuously repeated expressive details, CG animator Remington Scott ensured his face and body suitably jiggled.



05

FACE OFF

Spidey is unveiled, referencing a 1964 comic where Doc Ock unmasks a flu-weakened Peter Parker. Even in a huge tentpole pic, Raimi kept things personal. Maguire asked if his half-brothers could be involved. Raimi's reply? "Absolutely, I could use 'em right now!" They play the kids who return Spidey's mask.



06

SMASH AND GRAB

Doc Ock makes an entrance. Luckily, Frazier's "air piston" opened the doors for the metal-crushing invasion in one take: Molina, not a fan of stunt work, was flinching. Ock's 8ft tentacles were realised with puppeteering and CGI enhancements, helping *Spider-Man 2* to grab the Oscar for Best Visual Effects. ***KH***

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Don't even think about humming that tune...

IS IT JUST ME...

OR SHOULD SOUNDTRACKS NOT BE LISTENED TO BEYOND THE MOVIE?

asks Matt Maytum

As you can probably imagine, movie soundtracks frequently clog the airwaves in the *Total Film* office. So it makes me pretty unpopular when I veto the latest OST from the office stereo. Well, I say veto… I normally end up doing a silent protest with my headphones, while the offending LP spins.

It might seem weird that a movie obsessive like me would want to keep all film music a safe distance from my ears when outside of the viewing experience, but hear me out.

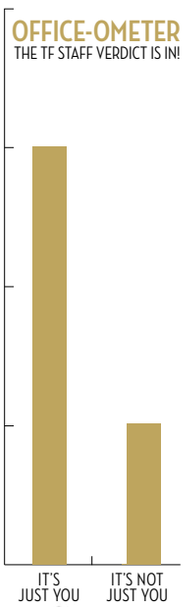
For me, the true power of film largely comes down to its ability to synthesise so many sensory stimuli into one satisfying piece of storytelling. So it doesn't seem right to just rip out one element to enjoy in isolation. More importantly, however, listening to those themes repeatedly will gradually diminish their impact.

Does Vangelis' legendary *Blade Runner* score have the same impact after it has soundtracked your elbow-to-chin rammed daily commute? Would Max Richter's heart-swelling 'On The Nature Of Daylight' still hit you square in the feels when it bookends the opening and closing moments of *Arrival* if you've listened to it on repeat until you've wrung all of the emotional juice out of it? And what possible use would Hans Zimmer's pulse-pounding *Dunkirk* music have outside the film, besides scoring a particularly intense deadline?

Familiarity breeds boredom, and no movie-watching experience is as exciting once you know every cue, beat and key change, your brain absent-mindedly tracing the film's rhythm ahead of the action. To single out a recent example: the yearning melancholy of *La La Land*'s 'City Of Stars', so heartfelt and poignant on screen, becomes cloying when listened to again and again. Scores are definitely the most problematic for me, but even a curated soundtrack – such as the hit *Guardians Of The Galaxy* mixtapes – provides too much of a shortcut to the film's structure.

In the same way that being too familiar with a scene from a trailer or an overused publicity still can pull you out of the moment when it pops up on screen, soundtrack-listening can equally ruin the viewing experience, so should be avoided at all costs. Or is it just me?

Share your reaction at www.gamesradar.com/totalfilm or on Facebook and Twitter.



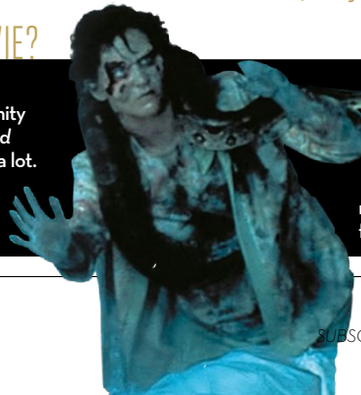
LAST MONTH IS DAY OF THE DEAD ROMERO'S BEST ZOMBIE MOVIE?

PAUL TENNANT
Day Of The Dead is superb. Such a creepy atmosphere backed up by that awesome musical score. Gore effects are amazing as well, especially Rhodes at the end.

DOUG KITSCH
Not the best, but still solid.

JOHN MELLOR
Day's not just the best *Romero* zombie movie. It's the best *zombie* movie. End of.

DANIEL ALLEN
For the story and humanity duality, *Day Of The Dead* was brilliant and added a lot. But for best contained movie, *Dawn* wins, with *Night* a close second.



KEN MOONEY
I love *Day*; effects and story stand out and the soundtrack is awesome. But for me, *Dawn* is the masterwork. Come on, the first Hare Krishna zombie ever!

60 Second Screenplay



SPOILER ALERT!

TF SAVES YOU A NIGHT OUT EVERY MONTH. THIS ISSUE: **KINGSMAN: THE GOLDEN CIRCLE...**

FADE IN:

EXT: SAVILE ROW, LONDON

Former Cockernee spy trainee TARON EGERTON has completed his transformation into Google Glass Austin Powers.

TARON EGERTON
Taxi! To the land of over-stylised batshit excess, guv'nor — and step on it! It's been 10 faackin' seconds already!

It's Kingsman versus cyborg as a thrilling chase scene ensues, exhausting the characters, the audience and the film's arsenal of thrilling chase scenes.

TARON EGERTON
Do one, Robo-cock! Now I've gotta spend the next couple of hours wading through sewage… talk about an on-the-nose in-joke!

In a game-changing twist that also frees up some budget to pay for, say, a few American A-listers, most of the supporting cast is wiped out.

TARON EGERTON
Michael Gambon! Nooo! My supposed best mate whom I'm already over! Nooo! Oh well, that should probably buy us another half-day of Jeff Bridges, at least.

MARK STRONG
To pass the bizarrely long time until the next set-piece, I suggest we initiate the Get Shitfaced protocol.

TARON EGERTON
OK, I've worked out our next move; we need to pander shamelessly to the American market, I mean, join forces with our transatlantic counterparts!

INT: KENTUCKY DISTILLERY

CHANNING TATUM
Hey y'all, hey y'all! Y'all should know, ah'm here to break the record for use of the word 'y'all', then I'm buggering off into a coma for the rest of the film. See y'all next time!

TARON EGERTON and MARK STRONG are taken to Statesman HQ, where they discover that COLIN FIRTH is actually recovering nicely from his fatal headshot wound.

HALLE BERRY
Yeah, don't ya know, we put some ice on it and he was right as rain. But there's a serious plot-stalling complication; he's got the dullest case of movie amnesia that we've seen since that time Michelle Rodriguez tried to worm out of being married to Vin Diesel in whichever *Fast & Furious* it was.

To restore COLIN FIRTH's memory, the agents swiftly agree to follow the strict medical procedure for such an occurrence: almost drowning him, then threatening to off a puppy.

COLIN FIRTH
…And I'm back! What'd I miss? Less excitement than one of those meerkat ads? Oh.

TARON EGERTON
Don't worry — one more bout of insincere sentiment then it'll be time for the gratuitous fingering scene! Schoolboy sniggers at the ready, people!

JEFF BRIDGES
The group behind the attack is called The Golden Circle; further research has revealed they borrowed the name from an old *Viz* annual.

INT: GOLDEN CIRCLE HIDEOUT, CAMBODIA

Drugs overlady JULIANNE MOORE cunningly avoids detection by operating from an eye-scorching monument to '50s kitsch visible from Saturn.

JULIANNE MOORE
Now for phase two of my plan: turning the world's drug users into Smurfs with herpes! Plus an injection of spurious social commentary!

Arriving in Cambodia, TARON EGERTON and COLIN FIRTH discover the shocking truth about PEDRO PASCAL: that he's the only Statesman who has even half a story arc.

TARON EGERTON
Elton John! Help us! Play some hits and yell "fuck" a lot! The only way to save this movie is to turn it into Tantrums & Tiaras 2.0!

PEDRO PASCAL, JULIANNE MOORE and her Decepticon dogs are dispatched, and all the drug users return from looking like the world's biggest amateur production of *Avatar*.

TARON EGERTON
Time to leave this *Happy Days* set before someone says we've jumped the sh… it!

FIN

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THOR: RAGNAROK

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